

## Manual fodder cutters sought to benefit small-scale cattle owning farmers

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*'Wastage reduced to 10 per cent while it is 25 per cent for direct feeding'*



*Mechanised fodder cutters that were distributed to cattle owning farmers in Salem.-PHOTO: P. GOUTHAM.*

SALEM, February 27, 2014 - Farmers in the district have made an appeal to the Government to distribute manual fodder

cutters to benefit farmers owning less than three cows. This would be in addition to the already existing distribution of mechanised fodder cutters at a subsidised rate for the benefit of farmers doing large scale business.

Farmers and Animal Husbandry Department (AHD) officials said that 25 per cent of fodder is wasted when it is given to animals for direct feeding.

"This can be reduced to 10 per cent when it is cut into small pieces using a fodder cutter. This would be of much use to farmers when there is drop in the fodder production, due to inadequate rainfall", they added.

An AHD official said that earlier the Government distributed manual fodder cutters to farmers, before giving away mechanised ones a few years ago.

"Mechanised ones are priced at Rs. 17,400 and are given to farmers for Rs. 4,350 at a subsidy of 75 per cent. This year 470 such cutters have been distributed to farmers of this district", he added.

Statistics available with the AHD here shows that there were as many as 6, 38, 164 milch animals – including 5, 58, 323 cows and 79, 841 buffalos – in addition to oxen in the district when the animal census was conducted in the district about a year ago.

"These animals are owned by about as many as two lakh farmers. It shows that the average per capita cattle head holding to three", an official said.

"Small scale cattle owners who have one or two milch animals cannot afford to spend more for buying the mechanised fodder cutters that are now given by the Government at a subsidised rate. Mechanised cutters could benefit only farmers with more cattle as they cannot spend much time in manually cutting fodder", farmer M. Ramesh (37) of Thalaivasal who owns two milch animals said. C. Vaiyapuri, state president of the United Farmers Association of Tamil Nadu, said that manual fodder cutters also have some advantages over the mechanised ones – that run on electricity. "Mechanised fodder cutters run on electricity. They cannot be used when there is power outage during summer. On the other hand, manual ones could be used by farmers even during such situations", he added.

## Farmers demand water for dry crop cultivation

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ERODE, February 27, 2014 - Several hundred farmers in Lower Bhavani Project (LBP) area displayed a show of strength before submitting a petition to the Public Works Department demanding water for second turn for dry crop cultivation.

Representatives of farmers' associations said water for dry crop was not released for the last three years and charged the PWD with acting against the interests of farmers in LBP irrigational area.

Citing a Government Order issued by the State in 1963, the president of Lower Bhavani Farmers' Federation P. Kasiannan said the PWD ought to fulfil water requirement in LBP area before releasing water for second crop in Kodiveri irrigation area.

Also, according to the recommendation of the Cauvery Tribunal, 4.65 tmc water must be released for irrigation in Kodiveri area, and 3.48 for Kalingarayan ayacut area, he said.

Against the requirement to release 8.13 tmc to the two ayacut areas, the PWD had provided 17 tmc this year, due to which the second crop could not be cultivated in the LBP area.

The PWD has not corrected its approach despite a representation made to the officials last November, Mr. Kasiannan said.

Farmers of LBP area have filed three writ petitions in the High Court and the reply to the petitions by the PWD was indicative of the department's intention to "settle scores" with LBP farmers, Mr. Kasiannan said.

According to the representatives of farmers' associations, the PWD was in a position to release water for the second crop by relying on the combined water storage of three tmc in Bhavani Sagar Dam and 10 tmc in Kundah and other hydel-power generating dams in the The Nilgiris district.

A Government Order issued in 1979 makes it possible for the PWD to utilise water in hydel reservoirs for irrigation, Mr. Kasiannan said.

Farmers have sought Chief Minister Jayalithaa's intervention as the stand of the PWD is that Kundah Dam is under the care and control of the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco), formerly Tamil Nadu Electricity Board.

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☐ ***'PWD ought to fulfil water requirement in LBP area before releasing water to Kodiveri'***

☐ ***Farmers of LBP area have filed three writ petitions in the High Court***

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## Farmers, workers undergo training on cono weeder

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PUDUKOTTAI, February 27, 2014 - A day-long training programme on the use of cono weeder during cultivation of paddy under System of Rice Intensification (SRI) technique was organised at Koovattupatti village near Iluppur on Wednesday.

A large number of farmers and workers underwent the training which was sponsored by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Vamban, near here on Wednesday. Explaining the advantages of the SRI technique, K. Geetha, Assistant Professor of KVK, said the weeds posed a great hindrance to paddy cultivation. The problem got aggravated because of scarcity of labour and because of non-uniform space between nurseries. The cono weeder came in handy for clearing the weeds, she said. M. Kathiravan, Assistant Professor of Seed Sciences, who demonstrated the cono weeder operation, said that its use in the fields converted the weeds into bio-manures.

## Farm-based enterprise opened in Ooty

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UDHAGAMANDALAM, February 27, 2014 - The need of the hour on the farm front is a change in approach. Emphasising this while inaugurating a farm-based enterprise called the Ooty Farmers-Producers Company Limited here on Wednesday, The Nilgiris Collector P. Sankar said that farmers should change with the times.

Adverting to the growing labour shortage, he said that farmers should go in for mechanisation and ensure that their yield goes up. Pointing out that the preferences of consumers were changing, he said that farmers should focus on value addition. Stating that the aim of the government was to double farm production and treble the profit of the farmers, Mr. Sankar said that the maximum allocation of funds was for the agriculture sector.

Urging the farmers to make optimum use of the schemes being implemented for their benefit, he said that they should become businessmen. They should function like industrialists and ensure that their activities are in tune with market trends.

Pointing out that integrated farm activities would fetch good returns, he said that importance should be given to packaging.

The Chairman of the company, B. Krishnamurthy, said that about 100 farmers from various parts of the district have joined hands to float the company with the help of the Agriculture department.

The objective was to facilitate supply of good quality inputs and ensure that the final products fetch good prices. He expressed the confidence that in course of time youth would be attracted to farming.

## Priority for farm sector lending: Andhra Bank GM

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ELURU, February 27, 2014 - The Andhra Bank's annual mission priority sector lays a major thrust on agriculture lending, said its general manager V.B. Bhagawathi. Speaking at a programme here on Wednesday, he said that agriculture lending accounted for Rs 18,000 crore out of the bank's total outlay of Rs 37,000 crore under the mission priority sector during the current fiscal. Agriculture lending was followed by educational sector with a credit size of Rs 1,400 crore, he added.

Mr. Bhagawathi informed that the bank was planning to set up 150 new branches in different parts of the country by March end. Andhra Bank Deputy General Manager D. Nagaraja Naidu said it was proposed to ensure that no Andhra Bank branch in the district was left without an onsite automatic telling machine (ATM) on its premises in the near future. Of Andhra Bank's 95 branches in West Godavari district, 73 of them are already equipped with ATMs and 14 more will add up before March, said Mr. Naidu.

## Farmers protest against closure of maize procurement centre

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BELLARY, February 27, 2014 - Farmers staged a protest at the APMC yard here on Wednesday against the closure of maize procurement centre on Friday. They demanded that the centre should continue to function as a large quantity of maize was yet to be procured.

As per the directions of the State government, the State Food and Civil Supplies Corporation opened procurement centres in Bellary, Kottur, and Hadagali.

District administration has announced that these centres would function till Friday.

According to farmers, a large quantity of maize, brought from various villages in Bellary taluk was yet to be procured and as the harvest was still going on, an equally large quantity of maize was expected to be brought here. Their grouse was that, on coming to the centre with maize, they were issued a token and made to wait.

“Some farmers have come 15 days back and are forced to stay back to protect their produce until it was procured. There are many other farmers who have been staying here even after their maize, though procured, has not been transported to godowns,” farmers charge. Farmers also complain of lack of facilities such as drinking water and that they had to spend more than Rs. 200 per day on food and drinking water. When contacted, officials of the procurement centre said that the shortage of lorries and godowns was the main reason for the delay in transportation of procured maize. Farmers urged authorities to accelerate the process and make payments as and when the maize was procured.

***The centre should continue to function as a large quantity of maize was yet to be procured***

## ‘Seed firm should pay farmers’

*KRRS questions spurious seed loss compensations using calamity fund*



*Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha president Kodihalli Chandrashekar (second from left) addressing a press conference in Davangere on Wednesday.*

DAVANGERE, February 27, 2014 - The Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha questioned the propriety of using the natural calamity relief funds (CRF) for

compensating the farmers who sustained losses owing to substandard cotton seeds distributed by Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company Limited (MAHYCO).

The Sangha sought to know why the government should compensate the losses accrued to farmers because of substandard seeds supplied by the company and urged the State to persuade the the company to compensate the losses of the farmers.

Talking to reporters here on Wednesday, Kodihalli Chandrashekar, president of the KRRS and Shamanna, General Secretary, said the action of the government to compensate the losses of the farmers through CRF fund released by the Union government proved that many in the government had connived with the company and ordered the Deputy Commissioners of different districts to compensate the losses through CRF funds.

### ‘Blacklist company’

He said the company, even after making the farmers to sustain losses of crores of rupees by distributing the substandard seeds was, engaged in selling seeds across the State. He demanded the government to blacklist MAHYCO and restrict its operations all over the State, or face severe agitation by the Sangha.

Mr. Chandrashekar said cotton was grown in more than 50,25,000 acres of land in different districts including in Davangere during the last season, and the crop failed in more than five lakh acres.

The farmers who had used the seeds of the company had sustained a loss of not less than Rs. 60,000 per acre, he said, adding it was the duty of the government to get the amount compensated by the company.

Mr. Shamanna said the government failed to pay the amount for the purchase of maize under the minimum support price, with only an amount of Rs. 59 crore paid to the farmers as against the total due of Rs. 149 crore till Tuesday in Davangere.

Similarly, in Shimoga, only an amount of Rs. 59 crore had been distributed and the government has to pay another Rs. 61 crore to the farmers for buying maize at the procurement centres.

He demanded the government to extend purchasing the maize in the procurement centres till the end of March, adding that only 50 per cent of the maize produced by the farmers had been sold at the procurement centres in Shimoga and Davangere and other districts.

# Farm fresh

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Market-bound: Farmers loading a truck with sugarcane after harvesting at an agriculture field at Kagulapadu village near Nellore. –Photo: K. RAVIKUMAR

## Training programme on coconut farming to be held

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ELURU, February 27, 2014 - Collector Siddharth Jain on Wednesday said the district administration is planning to organise a six-day training programme on coconut cultivation shortly under a programme named 'Kobbari nestam' in association with the Coconut Development Board. The programme intended to sensitise the farmers on the modern techniques in cultivation and harvesting of coconut, he added.

Mr. Jain asked the official machinery to speed up the process of distributing identity cards to workers engaged in coconut farming under the unorganized sector. When around 50,000 workers were identified under the sector in the district, only 2500-odd had received the cards so far, he said. The workers after given identity cards would receive training on skill development in the first phase and also modern tools for climbing the high-rise plantations and harvesting the fruits with little scope for accidents. As the officially identified workers alone were entitled welfare measures like insurance coverage extended by the official agencies, all the workers should join the process of identification voluntarily, he said.

## Priority sought for farm loan waiver

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KHAMMAM, February 27, 2014 - Speakers at a roundtable organised by the CPI (M)-affiliated Rythu Sangham here on Wednesday demanded that all political parties should

accord highest priority to the issue of waiver of farm loans and make conscious efforts to ensure substantial relief to the distressed farmers.

Addressing the conference held at Manchikanti Bhavan here, Rythu Sangham district secretary Nunna Nageswara Rao alleged that the government doled out subsidies worth thousands of crores of rupees to big industries favouring the rich sections.

### **Tall claims questioned**

"In sharp contrast, it turned a blind eye to the miserable plight of farmers reeling under the cascading effects of a series of natural calamities," he charged, alleging that several cyclone-hit farmers in the district were yet to receive concrete relief.

Notwithstanding its tall claims, the government had failed to come to the rescue of distressed farmers, he alleged. He demanded that all political parties give top priority to waiver of farm loans in their agendas.

Telugu Rythu Sangham State secretary N Venkateswarlu sought inclusion of the most important issue of waiver of agricultural loans in their election manifestoes by the political parties.

***'Government has doled out subsidies worth thousands of crores of rupees to big industries'***

## Farmer arrested for failure to repay education loan

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KOZHIKODE, February 27, 2014 - Outside the shed propped up on arecanut tree trunks and covered with a thin blue tarpaulin sheet, Leelamma Joseph recounts how N.T. Joseph, 73, her husband, landed in prison for defaulting on their daughter's education loan of Rs.1.25 lakh.

"Two men came here last Thursday [February 20] at 3 p.m. They told my husband that he had to go with them for putting his signature on some court papers concerning the loan. They told him that he would be back in an hour," Ms. Leelamma said.

The family did not hear from Mr. Joseph till late in the evening. "His lawyer called up and said he was under arrest. He said we should either pay up the loan amount or he would be transferred to the Kannur Central Jail. We collected Rs.25,000 after selling my daughter-in-law's jewellery. But they refused to accept the money and he was remanded," she said.

Mr. Joseph has been in jail for close to a week now. His arrest came hardly three days after Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram announced a moratorium on all education loans borrowed up to March 2009 and outstanding as on December 2013 — a move which came as a relief to approximately nine lakh student borrowers.

Mr. Joseph's family took the loan in 2004 to get daughter Sherin admitted to a nursing course. "We could not pay even a single instalment of the loan. Our land at Panniyeri (Vadakara) was classified as an ecologically sensitive area. We suffered agricultural loss. There was no means to pay. Now, we have to pay back Rs.3.25 lakh," Ms. Leelamma said. Enquiries revealed that the Cheekunnu branch alone had unrealised education loans to the tune of Rs.2.5 crore.

SBT sources denied any wrongdoing on their part. A civil suit was filed in 2010 following a "total lack of cooperation" on the part of Mr. Joseph. They said his arrest and incarceration were part of the "process of law," claiming that Mr. Joseph had misinformed the court that he had no means to repay the loan.

***Had no means to pay, claims N.T. Joseph***

## Sangha seeks fair price for sugarcane

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BIDAR, February 27, 2014 - Protest by the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha members demanding fair price for sugarcane entered the third day in Bidar on Wednesday.

Protestors took out a bike rally from Baridshahi gardens to Shivaji circle. They also walked to Deputy Commissioner's office shouting slogans against the government and the three cooperative factories in the district.

They submitted a memorandum with various demands to the DC office. They sought action against factories that were refusing to pay the state-advised price of Rs. 2,650 per tonne of sugarcane.

They asked the government to increase the SAP to Rs. 4,000 per tonne.

Factories should pay the amounts by creating by-products such as ethanol, bio-fertilizer, molasses, and electricity.

The government should pay Rs. 20,000 per acre to compensate crop loss, the Karnataka Millet and Gram Board should have a revolving fund of Rs. 1,000 crore and other demands were listed in the memorandum. Mallkarjun Swamy, Sidramappa Anadure, Baburao Joldabke, and others led the protest.

## Farmer's notebook

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Empowered: Attending one of the seminars organised by IISR's Cardamom Research Centre (CRC) at Appangala in Kodagu on spices cultivation was a turning point in Mrs. Prema Ganesh's life. —Photo: Special Arrangement

*Motorable roads were laid inside the plantation to make work easier*

## Cheaper biofuel using acid from farm waste

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*Ramesh Sharma*

Producing 2nd generation biofuel from dead plant tissue needs costly enzymes that break down cellulose into sugar, which is used to produce bioethanol. Now, a new technique does this using cheap acid from straw and rice husk.

# Private mill accused of not paying sugarcane price

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*Farmers submit memorandum to Deputy Commissioner*



*Sugarcane growers meeting Deputy Commissioner C. Shikha in Mysore on Wednesday.— photo: M.A. SRIRAM*

MYSORE, February 27, 2014 - Members of the Sugarcane Growers' Association, led by president Kurubur Shanthakumar, met Deputy Commissioner C. Shikha here on Wednesday to discuss their

grievances.

They alleged that a private sugar factory in Mysore district was not complying with the State government's order on minimum support price for sugarcane.

In a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner, the association complained that the factory was paying Rs. 2,400 a tonne of sugarcane instead of Rs. 2,500 as fixed by the government.

"Despite its reported promise to the government to comply with the order, the factory was paying Rs. 100 less for a tonne of sugarcane," alleged Mr. Shanthakumar. He urged the Deputy Commissioner to ensure that farmers get the remaining amount with interest.

The association also requested crediting the subsidy amount of Rs. 150 a tonne, earlier announced by the government, to the growers' account at the earliest.

He warned that they would lay a siege to the factory if the Deputy Commissioner did not take steps.

Mr. Shanthakumar said sugarcane farmers have agreed to remit Re. 1 per tonne of sugarcane supplied by farmers, as relief to the kin of farmer Vittal Arabhavi, who committed suicide outside the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belgaum in 2013.

Mr. Shanthakumar had written to all sugar factories in the State to deduct Re. 1 for each tonne of sugarcane supplied and hand over the amount collected to the farmer's kin.

The Commissioner, Sugarcane Development, had also directed factories to deduct Re. 1 as requested by growers. The association alleged that not all sugar factories had complied with the direction.

# Sugarcane that resists cold and produces oil

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*T. Singaravelou*

A multi-institutional team reports that it can increase sugarcane's geographic range, boost its photosynthetic rate by 30 per cent and turn it into an oil-producing crop for biodiesel production.



# Improved white ponni rice variety

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Ponni variety has been popular among Tamil Nadu farmers for a long time but the origin and source from which it was developed is still not known.

The variety is resistant to leaf yellowing (tungro virus), blast and bacterial blight diseases. Though the grain yield is less (4 - 4.5 tonnes from a hectare) than other commercial varieties, farmers preferred this variety owing to its fine quality and premium price in the market.

## **Former name**

Initially, called "mashuri kuttai" the yield realised by farmers was very low due to admixtures and segregated population with the variations in crop duration ranging from 90 to 140 days.

Plant breeders at Tamil Nadu Rice Research Institute (TRRI), Aduthurai had collected 300 samples of seeds, from various locations in state, screened and finally selected three improved lines for further selection.

After strenuous efforts the new improved white ponni was released in 1986 and even today finds ready acceptance from farmers. It is a 130-135 duration variety and suitable for late samba/thaladi season in Cauvery delta.

The improved variety was tested in 11 districts of which in eight districts it recorded higher yield of 5.8 per cent than IR 20 variety.

## **Yield**

It recorded 300 kg/ha more yield than traditional ponni and has yield potential up to 7.4 tonnes per hectare. It is suitable for raw and parboiled rice consumption.

Besides excellent grain quality, other special features include its resistance to many diseases such as tungro virus, leaf yellowing, blast and bacterial leaf blight.

It grows tall and well under restricted fertilizer use especially nitrogen application which should be limited to 75-100 tonnes per hectare depending upon the soil fertility and climate.

Organic farmers mostly prefer this variety as it responds well under natural nutrients supply. (Dr. R. Rajendran is presently Director-in-charge, Tamil Nadu Rice Research Institute, TNAU, Aduthurai – 612 101, Tamil Nadu, Phone: 0435-2472108 and 2472098, email: dirtrri@tnau.ac.in)

# Aavin honours milk suppliers

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KRISHNAGIRI, February 27, 2014 - Three hundred milk producers who supplied maximum quantity to primary cooperative societies were given cash incentive of Rs. 6 lakh by the Dharmapuri District Milk Producers Cooperative Union (Aavin) comprising Krishangiri and Dharmapuri districts on Monday.

Aavin sources here said that the government had sanctioned the amount as a one-time incentive.

The first 100 top milk producers were given Rs. 3,000 each and the next 100 Rs. 2,000 each, and the next 100 were given Rs. 1,000 each as cash incentive along with a 'Star Producer' certificate, the sources said.

As many as 148 milk producers in Krishangiri district and 152 in Dharmapuri district got the cash incentive and certificate.

District Collector T.P. Rajesh distributed the awards in the presence of S. Thennarasu, chairman, DDMPCU, and general manager K. Kombaiyan.

# Onion storage gets a boost

Experts from TNAU Agricultural Engineering College to visit the sites

## A ROOF OVER 'PATTARAI'



Photo: A. Muralitharan

- ▶ Five permanent sheds built over pattarai
- ▶ Farmers have to bear initial expenditure
- ▶ These sheds cut down recurring expenses
- ▶ It can protect the produce even from downpour

PERAMBALUR, February 27, 2014 - Five modern onion godowns have come up in Perambalur district with financial assistance of the Agricultural Engineering Department. Being a pilot project, it envisages a subsidy of Rs. 4,000 per tonne capacity for setting up a godown. The farmers of Perambalur district adopt a conventional method of storing onion in *Pattarai* which protects the onion from rain and shine. The base of the *pattarai* is at an elevated position and is covered with bio-material such as thatches and bamboos. All around it is covered with hay. It is kept in the open in the fields. Under the pilot scheme, a permanent

shed is built over and above the *pattarai*. Although the old method can safeguard the produce from showers, it cannot withstand any heavy downpour. Hence, as an improvised storage procedure, the subsidy is being provided. Thus the new attempt will be an added facility without altering the conventional strategy.

Moreover, the recurring cost for the purchase of bamboos, hay, thatches and so on can be avoided. For the modern godowns, the farmers will have to incur only the initial expenditure.

Perambalur is a major producer of shallot (small onions). When the prices are not remunerative, farmers preserve the onions in *pattarai* and wait for the right time to sell it. While, the *pattarai* can protect the produce for three months, the duration of storage under the pilot project is doubled, according to N. Rajendran, assistant executive engineer, Agricultural Engineering Department.

This is an economical scheme and the experts from the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University – Agricultural Engineering College are expected to visit the godowns and offer their suggestion.

Ravichandran of Irur has set up a 12 tonne capacity godown in the village at a cost of Rs. 1.2 lakh. The government has released a subsidy of Rs. 48,000 to him, Mr. Rajendran said. The modern godowns have come up in Padalur (two godowns of 12 tonne and five tonne capacity), Nallur near Veppur (eight tonne capacity), and Pommanpadi (five tonne capacity), Mr. Rajendran said.

Welcoming the move, R. Raja Chidambaram, State secretary of Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sanam, said this project would help the onion growers in a big way, avoiding exploitation by middle men. The department has chosen the Perambalur district, which is leading in the production.

While addressing farmers' grievances day meeting held recently, Darez Ahamed said that the pilot project should be made a regular scheme for the district and he has planned to impress upon the government in this regard.

# Coir cluster unit opened

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SIVAGANGA, February 27, 2014 - Stating that he was not against freebies, Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram has said schemes and projects launched with people's participation brought more benefits to the people and remained long-lasting. Inaugurating the Singai Coir Cluster unit at A. Kalapur near here on Wednesday, he said he was not against freebies as people sometimes required free power and rice and diesel at subsidised rates but projects launched with people's participation would be more beneficial to the people and successful.

The government should understand the needs and demands of the people and fulfil the same with their participation to make the schemes successful and long-lasting and "this I believed is democracy," Mr.Chidambaram said, pointing out the coir cluster unit was established with beneficiaries' contribution.

He said the inauguration of the unit, established at a cost of Rs.7 crore, marked the fruition of six-year efforts by him and the Coir Board. Mr.Chidambaram thanked the State government for its support and cooperation for launching the project.

The coir cluster would help improve the standard of living of about 30,000 coir spinners in this region, he added.G. Balachandran, Chairman, Coir Board, said the cluster unit presently had facilities to produce non-skid PVC-tufted coir mats. Separate units could be established as part of expansion to produce trays, coir wood, handicraft items and garden articles he said.

## **Toilets in schools**

The Minister, who also dedicated 28 toilet complexes constructed in 15 schools in the district by Sulabh International Social Service Organisation on behalf of the India Infrastructure Finance Corporation Company Limited,expressed concern that 50 per cent of the population was still defecating in the open. Girl students suffered the most for lack of toilets and sanitation facilities at schools, he added.

He said people and children got many diseases because of open defecation, and it was sad that people did not use the public toilets established by the governments.

# Water level

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**Mettur** - The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 49.82 feet on Wednesday against its full reservoir level of 120 feet. The inflow was 782 cusecs and the discharge 2,136 cusecs.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Wednesday stood at 53.70 feet (permissible level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 576.96 cusecs and 504.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 72.90 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 147 cusecs and 330 cusecs of water was discharged.

**Kanyakumari** - The level in Pechipparai dam stood at 11.10 feet, 41feet in Perunchani, 3.84 feet in Chittar I, 3.93 feet in Chittar II, 3.70 feet in Poigai and 48.88 feet in Mambazhathuraiyaru.

# New technology to boost production of crops

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*Soil mulching being adopted for raising horticultural crops on 50 hectares in Tirunelveli district*



TIRUNELVELI, February 27, 2014 - Plasticulture, a new technology of soil mulching with polythene sheet that conserves soil and water, is being adopted for horticultural crops for the first time in the district, which has started experiencing adverse effects of monsoon failure for the fifth year in succession.

It has been introduced for enhancing productivity thanks to the implementation of National Horticulture

Mission (NHM). Mulching is a practice of covering the soil surface around plants to make conditions more conducive for plant growth through in-situ moisture conservation, enhanced microbial activities in the root zone and weed control.

Mulching is in practice here since ages in one or another form as the farmers generally use dry leaves, straw, hay, stones as mulching materials for pepper, clove, fruit tree crops etc. However, introduction of the LDPE film as mulch increases the efficiency of water use by improved moisture conservation, soil temperature and elimination of weed growth thereby increase in crop yield. Generally, thickness of LDPE film used for mulching varies from 10 to 200 micron. Outcome of the research conducted by various research organizations confirm the efficacy of plastic mulch in enhancing the yield, water saving and weed control.

Plasticulture intervention in cultivation of high-valued crops like fruits, vegetables and medicinal plants may contribute significantly to higher growth rate, says S. Raja Mohamed, Deputy Director of Horticulture, Tirunelveli.

Under protected cultivation component of NHM, during the current fiscal year, Rs. 5 lakh has been earmarked for covering 50 hectares with plastic mulching at 50 per cent subsidy of Rs. 10,000 an hectare to the maximum of two hectares for a beneficiary, he says.

Demonstrating the method of laying of plastic mulching held recently for acid-lime trees at a farm at Pudukulam in Palayamkottai block, Mr. Mohamed said that the plastic mulching had the benefits of enhancing the total crop protection and productivity, keeping the forest cover and rich biodiversity intact, minimizing the soil erosion induced due to traditional food production system, managing the rainwater in a better way for life saving irrigation and thereby uplifting the economic status of farmers.

“There is tremendous scope of adoption of plasticulture technology. But the adoption rate is very slow due to lack of awareness. Only some headway has been made in shade-net house and drip irrigation technology. Intensive efforts in the form of demonstrations and sensitization are being made in all blocks to popularize this technology,” he says.

As of now, nearly 50 hectares of area, benefitting 50 farmers, have been covered with plastic mulching for fruit crops like mango, acid-lime, sapota, nelli and banana.

S. Tamilvendan, Assistant Director of Horticulture, Palayamkottai, and P. Valluvan, Horticulture Officer, Palayamkottai, were present

# Foot-and-mouth disease vaccination camp from March 1

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VELLORE, February 27, 2014 - The sixth round of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) vaccination camp is to be conducted in all villages coming under the jurisdiction of veterinary dispensaries in Vellore district from March 1 to 21.

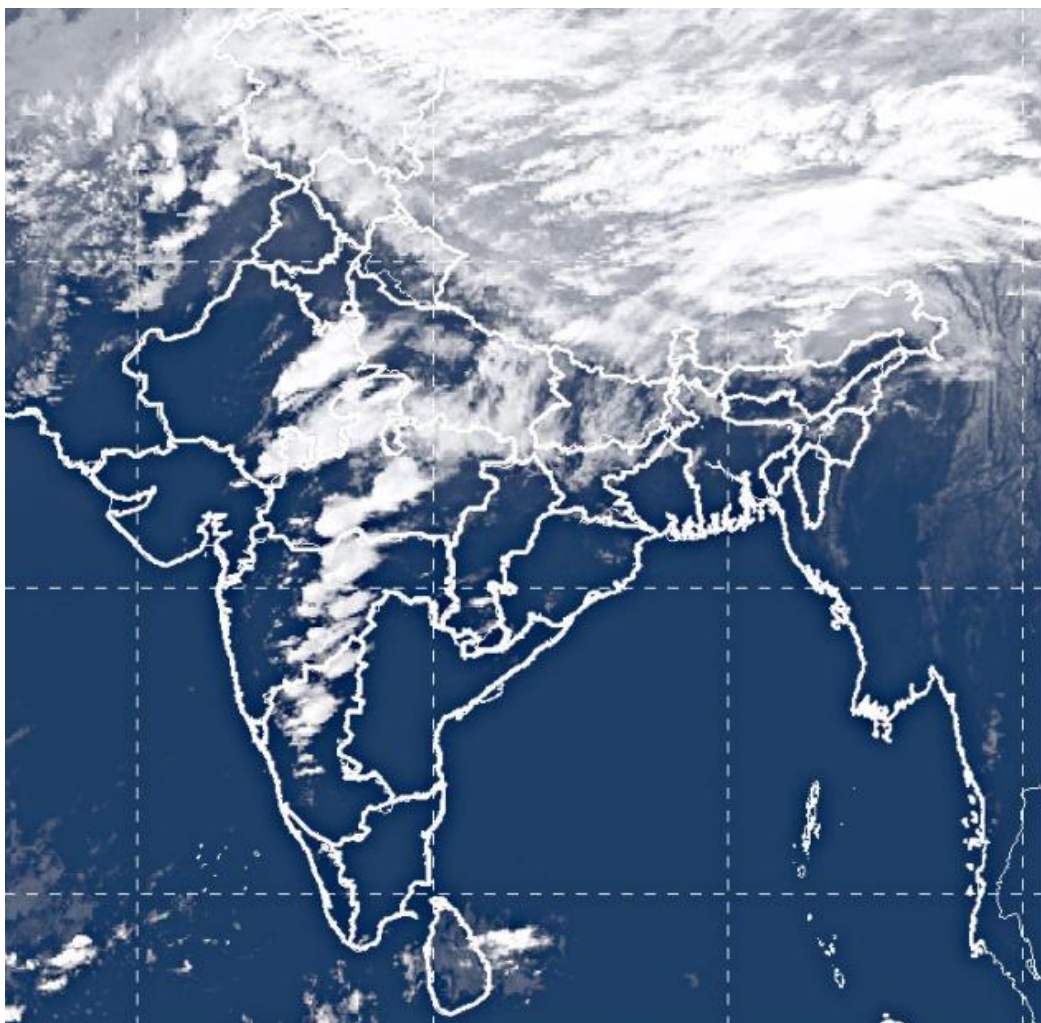
According to a release from the Regional Joint Director of Animal Husbandry, Vellore, FMD spreads to cattle through a virus. It spreads through fodder, water, air, close contact of animals, and through aerosols to a distance of 300 km.

The disease is highly prevalent during summer. In the initial stages, it manifests itself in the form of fever with a temperature of 41 degrees Celsius. The later symptoms include excessive secretion of stringy or foamy saliva, and formation of blisters in the mouth, tongue, hooves, skin and teats of a cow. The calves of affected cows might die of the disease. The disease would lead to prolonged infertility and resultant economic loss to the dairy farmers.

Therefore, the Centre has decided to implement FMD Prevention Scheme to fully control the disease.

## Weather

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INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on February 26.

# Weather

Chennai - INDIA

## Today's Weather



Sunny

**Thursday, Feb 27**

Max 29° | Min 22°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 83

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:28

Sunset: 06:16

Barometer: 1015

## Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

**Friday, Feb 28**

Max 29° | Min 22°

## Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday

**Mar 1**



31° | 23°

Partly Cloudy

Sunday

**Mar 2**



31° | 22°

Partly Cloudy

Monday

**Mar 3**



26° | 23°

Cloudy

Tuesday

**Mar 4**



26° | 22°

Overcast

Wednesday

**Mar 5**



26° | 23°

Overcast

THE TIMES OF INDIA

## Flower show adorns CSA farmer fair

KANPUR: On the second day of the farmer fair at Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, a [flower show](#) had been organized.

Those present during the event were university VC Munna Singh, director extension Sameer Pal, media in charge Naushad Khan and other faculty members.

AK Dubey, in charge of the horticulture department of the university said [IIT-Kanpur](#), Kamla Retreat, Small Arms Factory, Jain International School and State Bank of India participated in the flower show.

Various varieties of flowers such as dahlia, larkspur, flask, gajenia, among others, were on display in the fair. Varieties of cactus and money plant were also displayed.

The event was judged by horticulture scientists AR Singh, RP Singh, NC Pandey and S Shukla. The first prize was bagged by IIT-Kanpur. The first runner-up was Kamla Retreat followed by Small Arms Factory and SBI. tnn

## Processors cut output on high raw cashew prices

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**Kochi, February 26:** A temporary squeeze in kernel supplies in the next 2-3 months is likely as several processors in India and Vietnam have cut production since December due to high raw cashew nut (RCN) prices. At the same time, it could also result in some processors moving in a hurry to buy when West African RCN shipments start in mid-March.

The cashew kernel market was steady during December-January moving in the range of \$3.75-3.90 for W240 and \$3.30-3.40 for W320.

Last fortnight, some processors in both the origins sold at lower levels - business reported as low as \$3.60 for W240 and \$3.20 for W320. These lower levels were offered by very few processors, while others asked 10-20 cents higher. During last week, the range of offers was W240 from \$3.60-3.85, W320 from \$3.20-3.40, W450 from \$2.95-3.10, SW320 from \$3-3.10, SW360 from \$2.80-2.90, SSW from \$2.45-2.55, splits \$2.45-2.55, pieces from \$1.65 to \$1.80/lb (fob). Prices for brokens have moved up by 10-20 cents in the last couple of months with very little volume being offered from Vietnam.

### **Slip in RCN prices**

However, India exports negligible quantities of brokens. Indian market, both for wholes and brokens, has been quiet for the last couple of weeks but there was reasonable activity during December/January.

"We expect domestic market to pick up activity after mid-March," Pankaj N Sampath, a Mumbai-based dealer told *Business Line*.

Tanzania RCN prices have come down from a peak of \$1,450 a tonne c&f to \$1,300-50 a tonne, but most of the slightly smaller crop was sold at higher levels. Availability from Mozambique is smaller than normal. Outlook for 2014 Northern crop, which constitutes over 75 per cent of world production, is good so far. There is no adverse news from any origin. The only concern, at this time, is the impact of the changes in regulations in Ivory Coast, the biggest producer in Africa. Small quantities have been shipped from Nigeria.

Shipments from Benin, Ghana, Ivory Coast will start in second half of March. After some trades for small quantities in January at high levels, offers have come down in the last two weeks and the current range is Nigeria from \$900 to \$950 a tonne c&f / Ivory Coast from \$1,000 to \$1,050 a tonne c&f / Benin & Ghana from \$1,100 to \$1,150 a tonne c&f.

Although RCN prices have come down in the last couple of weeks, there is still a 15-20 cents disparity between current RCN and current kernel prices, he said. Following a reasonable growth in usage in all markets in 2013, there are signs that usage will be good during 2014 as well due to the high prices of other nuts and relative stability of cashew prices at the lower end of range of last few years.

The trade feels that the market may see some volatility between now and May 2014 depending on news about the crop progress and RCN price movements and after that it should stabilise and move in a narrow range for rest of the year.

## Spot rubber prices improve

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**Kottayam, February 26:** Domestic rubber prices improved on Wednesday.

Traders were optimistic about the outcome of the Cabinet meeting which is expected to take measures on rubber procurement.

According to sources, the absence of sellers kept the market firm during late trading hours. Sheet rubber improved to Rs. 146 ( Rs. 145) a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

The grade firmed up at Rs. 143 ( Rs. 142), according to dealers. March futures recovered to Rs. 147.40 ( Rs. 145.23), April to Rs. 151.11 ( Rs. 149.59), May to Rs. 154.51 ( Rs. 153.03), June to Rs. 155.61 ( Rs. 154.21) and July to Rs. 157.50 ( Rs. 155.15) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) closed at Rs. 133.04 ( Rs. 133) at Bangkok. March futures closed at ₹215.4 ( Rs. 130.54) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. Spot rubber rates ( Rs. /kg) were: RSS-4: 146 (145); RSS-5: 144.50 (143); Ungraded: 141(140); ISNR 20: 143 (143); and Latex 60%: 120 (120).

## Pulses rule steady despite subdued buying

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**Indore, February 26:** PULSES RULE STEADY

Pulses and pulse seeds ruled steady in Indore mandis barring chana and masur. Tur has been ruling stable in Indore mandis for the past few days on subdued demand and rise in arrival of new crop from Maharashtra. Tur (Maharashtra) ruled at Rs. 4,100-50, while tur (Madhya Pradesh) at Rs. 3,800. Moong (bold) was at Rs. 7,200-7,400, while moong (medium) ruled at Rs. 6,500-6,800. Moong dal (medium) was at Rs. 8,200-8,500, moong dal (bold) at Rs. 8,600-8,700, while moong mongar ruled at Rs. 9,000-9,200. Urad (bold) was at Rs. 4,350-4,400, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs. 3,800-4,000. Masur gained Rs. 50 to Rs. 4,350 a quintal on weak arrival and reports of damage to the crop. Our Correspondent

## Now, a remote-controlled tiller for your paddy field

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Time saving and cut down in fuel consumption are the major benefits

Easy to use A woman operating the remote-controlled power tiller in Mangalore on Wednesday

**Mangalore, February 26:** To ease the hardship of cultivating paddy, an entrepreneur from Dakshina Kannada district has developed a remote-controlled system for power tiller. This remote system is used as an attachment

to power tillers.

It includes a hand-held remote unit, a controller unit that needs to be mounted on the power tiller and an air compressor unit for powering the pneumatic systems.

**Gets patent**

The designer of the system – Prajwal V Kumar, Managing Director and co-founder of Mangalore Robautonics Pvt Ltd – said that he has got a patent for this system in the country.

An operator can make the power tiller function without entering the field. This saves the job of walking behind the tiller for several hours together.



Explaining the operation of the system, he said the hand-held remote unit has three control switches. These switches help in directing the tiller to the left or right, and in stopping the tiller when brakes are applied.

### **How it works**

The electronic radio transmitter in the hand-held unit sends signals to the controller unit on the tiller to perform operations.

The system can be operated within a range of 100 metres.

Stating that the system has been tested in major paddy-growing areas in the country and in different soils, Kumar said a normal power tiller takes some three hours to plough an acre of land, but the remote-controlled tiller can finish the work in two hours. It helps to cut down fuel consumption. Even an unskilled person can operate the tiller at the press of a button, he said.

Kumar said that the company has not begun commercial production of the system.

However, around 50 such units have been sold to a Bangalore-based company for mounting on power tillers. On the amount spent on research and development for the project, he said around Rs. 60 lakh was spent by him. The average cost of a unit works out to Rs. 35,000-45,000. The cost will come down, if the Government extends subsidy to farmers.

The problem, however is that the Government has no norm to certify such a system.

## Centre to file joint affidavit in apex court favouring field trial in GM crops

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We want at least trials to take place while taking all precautions, says Pawar

Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar

**New Delhi, February 26:** The Centre will soon file a joint affidavit of all ministries concerned in the Supreme Court favouring of field trials in genetically modified crops.

Stating this here on Wednesday, Agriculture Minister, Sharad Pawar hinted at a common approach between his Ministry and the Ministry of Environment and Forests on the issue. The latter, earlier, had advocated a stance that seemed to favour anti-GM activists and NGOs.

“We want at least trials to take place, while taking all precautions,” Pawar said. This is apparently also the view taken by the new Environment Minister M. Veerappa Moily in contrast to his predecessors Jayanthi Natarajan and Jairam Ramesh.

### **Indefinite moratorium**

A majority of members of a Technical Expert Committee (TEC), appointed by the Supreme Court, had suggested an “indefinite moratorium” on field trials of GM crops until the shortcomings in the existing regulatory process are plugged.

The Court had subsequently asked the Government to state its position on the TEC’s majority recommendation. But with the Agriculture and Environment Ministries taking

divergent stands – one favouring field trials and the other citing the “precautionary principle” – the Government was not able to present its case either way.

### **Kharif plantings**

“We are now going ahead with filing a joint affidavit,” Pawar said.

The agri-biotech industry is awaiting a decision from the Government, given that plantings for the new kharif season are set to start from June.

There are a host of GM crops including cotton, corn, rice, castor and vegetable lines that are awaiting regulatory clearances for field trials.

### **GEAC meet on March 21**

Any delay in clearances would rule out field trials being taken up during the coming season.

A decision on this cannot be left to the next government, sources said.

Meanwhile, the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee is slated to meet on March 21 to consider approvals for field trials.

The Government may file its affidavit by then. The GEAC may also give the clearances in-principle, but subject to the apex court giving its green signal, sources said.

Earlier, addressing the Kharif 2014 Conference of State Agriculture Department officials, Pawar said use of biotechnology was imperative to meet the burgeoning demand of food grain from limited land resources.

“Biotechnology has great potential to improve yields. The Government is committed to use biotechnology and other new technology for agriculture development and back field trials of GM crops with crop specific dedicated monitoring protocol system,” Pawar said.

## **‘IMD forecast on monsoon by mid-April’**

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El Nino may not affect foodgrain output; Govt prepares contingency plan for 449 districts

**New Delhi, February 26:** Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar on Wednesday said that it was too early to predict how the Monsoon will behave this year and any emergence of El Nino is unlikely to affect the country’s foodgrain output next season starting July.

“It is too early to say. I had discussions with the officials of the Indian Meteorological Department. They are seriously concentrating on this and said they will be able to come out with Monsoon forecast in the second week of April,” Pawar told reporters on sidelines of Kharif 2014 Conference.

El Nino, caused by rising surface temperature in the Pacific Ocean, leads to drought in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly India. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology recently forecast the emergence of El Nino this year.

“We had seen this type of situation in 2009. It will not be as severe as to affect foodgrain production. We are keeping a close watch,” Pawar said.

With prediction pointing to a likely occurrence of the El Nino, the Agriculture Department has started preparing contingency plans to meet any possible dry spell.

“The contingency plans for 449 districts in about 23 States have already been prepared,” said JS Sandhu, Agriculture Commissioner. Besides procuring seeds of short duration varieties of various crops, the Government is also asking States to promote the concept of raising community nurseries of rice to deal with the situation.

Citing the forecasts made by various weather agencies, Sandhu asked the agriculture department officials of all States to be prepared for poor rains this year.

Earlier addressing the Kharif 2014 conference, Pawar said that the country was likely to surpass the agriculture growth target of 4 per cent during the 12th Plan ending 2017.

The country is expected to harvest a record foodgrain output of 263.2 million tonnes in the current season to June. Expressing concern that the country’s agriculture was still monsoon-dependent, Pawar called upon the farm scientists to develop stress- and drought-resistant varieties.

# FMC okays rise in jeera tick size

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**Mumbai, February 26:** The Forward Markets Commission today approved increase in the tick size of jeera futures contract on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange to Rs. 5 a quintal from Rs. 2.50. The modification in contract specification will be applicable in all the running contracts, FMC said. Cogencis

# Pepper regains sting

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**Kochi, February 26:** Pepper prices continued to rule hot on the spot on emergence of buying support amid tight availability. Having increased to unreasonable levels on the commodity-specific regional exchange on Tuesday, March contracts underwent correction, market sources told *Business Line*. Farm-grade pepper from Wayanad is being traded at Rs. 517-520 a kg. Idukki's Rajkumari pepper is fetching Rs. 525, while in Adimali high range pepper is being traded at Rs. 520-522. Spot prices went further by Rs. 200 to Rs. 50,800 (ungarbled) and Rs. 52,800 (garbled) a quintal. Export prices were at \$8,700 c&f Europe and \$8,950 a tonne c&f US. GK Nair

# Rising arrivals crush castor

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**Rajkot, February 26:** Castor seed spot price decreased on the back of increasing arrival of new crop. Moreover, demand was weak as buyers are waiting for some more correction. On the other hand, futures gained marginally due to speculative buying. About 38,000-40,000 bags of castor seed arrived in Gujarat and the price declined by Rs. 10 to Rs. 795-800 for 20 kg. Similarly, about 3,300-3,500 bags arrived in Saurashtra for Rs. 755-785. Our Correspondent

# Business Standard

## Potato up 1.4% on upsurge in demand

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Supported by rising demand, [potato](#) prices surged 1.49% to Rs 1,201.40 per quintal in futures market today as speculators indulged in creating positions at futures trade.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), potato for delivery in March shot up by Rs 17.60, or 1.49% to Rs 1,201.40 per quintal in business turnover of 60 lots.

Likewise, the potato for delivery in April traded higher by Rs 5.60, or 0.47% to Rs 1,205.50 per quintal in 73 lots.

Market analysts said besides rising demand in the spot markets, tight arrivals from producing belts, helped potato prices to rise at futures trade here.

## Chana up 0.3% on spot demand

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[Chana](#) remained higher for the second straight day and prices rose further by Rs 10 to Rs 3,072 per quintal in futures traded today as speculators enlarged positions, supported by rising demand in the spot market.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, chana for delivery in May added Rs 10, or 0.33% to Rs 3,072 per quintal with an open interest of 30,710 lots.

On the similar lines, the commodity for delivery in April traded higher by Rs 9, or 0.30% to Rs 3,032 per quintal in 82,570 lots.

Analysts said rising demand in the spot markets mainly influenced chana prices to rise at futures trade as speculators created positions.

## Cardamom up 1.1% on spot demand

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[Cardamom](#) prices rose 1.18% to Rs 842 per kg in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions on firm demand in the spot markets.

Further, restricted arrivals from producing regions also supported the uptrend.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), cardamom for delivery in April rose Rs 9.90, or 1.18%, to Rs 842 per kg, with a business turnover of 227 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in March jumped Rs 9, or 1.12%, to Rs 811 per kg, with trading volume of 487 lots.

Traders said besides rising demand in the spot markets, restricted arrivals from producing regions mainly led to the rise in cardamom futures prices.

# Palm oil up 0.8% as demand picks up

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[Crude palm oil](#) prices up by 0.82% to Rs 587.80 per 10 kg in futures trading after participants created speculative positions following rising demand in the spot markets.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), crude palm oil for delivery in March rose by Rs 4.80, or 0.82%, to Rs 587.80 per 10 kg in business turnover of 112 lots.

Likewise, the oil for delivery in February up by Rs 3.70, or 0.63%, to Rs 588.90 per 10 kg in 12 lots.

Analysts said speculative positions built-up by participants driven by pick-up in spot demand mainly led to rise in crude palm oil prices at futures trade.

# Coriander up 1.6% on spot demand

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[Coriander](#) prices rose by 1.66% to Rs 9,305 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators enlarged their positions supported by rising demand in the spot markets.

At the [National Commodity and Derivative Exchange](#), coriander for April delivery gained Rs 152, or 1.66%, to Rs 9,305 per quintal with an open interest of 42,980 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in May traded higher by Rs 151, or 1.62%, to Rs 9,473 per quintal, with an open interest of 26,830 lots.

Market analysts said increased buying by speculators on pick-up in spot demand against restricted arrivals from producing belts mainly influenced coriander prices at futures trade.

# Gold down 0.3% on weak global cues

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[Gold](#) prices moved down by 0.34% to Rs 30,137 per 10 gram in futures trade today after participants off-loaded partial positions, tracking a weak trend overseas as physical demand declined.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), gold for delivery in April declined by Rs 103, or 0.34%, to Rs 30,137 per 10 gram in business turnover of 1,205 lots.

Likewise, the metal for delivery in June shed Rs 88, or 0.30%, to Rs 29,527 per 10 gram in 16 lots.

Market analysts said a weak trend in the overseas markets due to subdued physical demand at higher levels mainly put pressure on gold prices in futures trade here.

Globally, gold today fell to \$1,338.70 an ounce from yesterday's \$1,340.64 in Singapore.

# Onion dehydration units in Gujarat doing brisk business

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With considerable fall in [onion prices](#) in the last two months, [dehydration](#) units in Gujarat are doing brisk business. Dehydration units were finding it tough to sustain business, when prices of the commodity had peaked to Rs 85-100 a kg in November-December last year. According to industry sources, though the season commenced late this year, all dehydration units were operating in full capacity, as of now.

Prices of onions in the retail market had surged to Rs 85-100 a kg in select regions of the country last year. However, in Gujarat, the price peaked to Rs 85-88 a kg in September-October 2013. But now, prices have reached lower levels of Rs three-nine a kg in wholesale market due to higher supply.

Per day arrival of onion in Gujarat market is estimated between 400,000 and 450,000 bags (50 kg a bag) mainly in Bhavnagar, Mahuva and Gondal blocks, where most of the onion dehydration units are located.

"We were worried because of the soaring prices of onion. This year, season started late but still the dehydration units are doing well. All onion dehydration units are working in full capacity since last two months," said Asgar Chattariya, secretary of the All-India Dehydration Association.

According to industry sources, dehydration season generally begins in December, but this time, it began one month late in January.

Chattariya said, "Currently, the demand is normal but we are hopeful for some improvement in March, as Indian dehydrated onion is cheaper than those produced in countries like China." India's per day production of dehydrated onion is around 200-250 tonnes and the demand at present is at the same level.

Vitthalbhai Koradiya, managing director of Maharaja Dehydration Pvt Limited in Mahuva, Bhavnagar, said, "Due to higher production of onion in India, its prices have come down drastically in last two months and this has helped us survive. The international demand has also gone up hence we are doing good business."

With favourable climatic conditions this year and enough moisture in the soil, the agriculture ministry has estimated 13 per cent rise in output at 19 million tonnes against 16 million two years ago.

Ghanshyam Patel, chairman of Mahuva Agriculture Produce Marketing Cooperative ([APMC](#)), said, "At current price level, profit of farmers is maintained. But, if onion price fall further farmers could face losses." In India, there are 90 active onion dehydration units. Of these, 75 units are located in Gujarat mostly in Bhavnagar, Mahuva, Vadodara and Gondal (Rajkot). The country has about 30 export oriented units of onion dehydrated products while the rest are suppliers.

In this rabi season, sowing was done in 72,600 hectares against 17,500 hectares in the corresponding period last season.

The onion is cultivated in both kharif and rabi seasons. In comparison with the average sowing area of onion for the last three years, the sowing was up 136 per cent. The three

year average for onion sowing is 53,600 hectares, against which sowing this rabi season has been in 72,600 hectares.

This is the second highest sowing for onion in the last decade. Highest onion sowing was recorded in 2005-06 when sowing was done in 73,300 hectares.

## Onion price rises 50% in 2 weeks

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After falling to the level of cost of production, [onion](#) prices recovered to record a 50 per cent increase in the past two weeks, following controlled supply from farmers.

In the benchmark [Lasalgaon](#) (Maharashtra, near Nashik) market, Asia's largest spot onion selling yard, it was Rs 8-10 a kg on Wednesday, a steady increase from Rs 5-5.50 a kg two weeks earlier. The model price announced by the Nashik-based National Research and Development Foundation ([NHRDF](#)) showed a little over 50 per cent increase in the price on February 15, to close at Rs 9.15 a kg on Tuesday from Rs 6 a kg two weeks earlier. The off-spot prices were Rs 3.50 a kg two weeks before, with farmers planning to dump on the road instead of selling in mandis.

"Total arrivals slumped to 322.5 tonnes when onion was ruling at Rs 6 a kg on February 15. But, with the increase in prices, arrivals also increased. On Tuesday, total arrivals recorded at 1,640 tonnes, with the price quoted at Rs 9.15 a kg. This indicates farmers have full control over supply," said R P Gupta, director. NHRDF.

There is almost no export demand due to the short shelf life. The quality of the late [kharif season](#) crop (largely harvested and supplied to the market currently) is poor, compared to the rabi season crop which has a shelf life of 12 months. Hence, exporters are currently abstaining from booking in large quantity.

"The current price rise can be attributed only to controlled supply from farmers, as their holding capacity has increased. Both exporters and bulk consumers remained absent from the market," said a senior official from one of the largest onion export houses.

India's exports declined 33 per cent to 853,000 tonnes in the first eight months (April-November) of the current financial year. India exports onions to North Africa and West Asia, Sri Lanka and a number of Southeast Asian and neighbouring countries. In 2012-13, the country had exported 1.82 million tonnes. Our annual production is estimated at 13.15 mt, with 773,000 hectares as the area under cultivation. In 2012-13, production was 1.66 mt.

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