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# THE HINDU

## **TNAU plans community radio stations at KVKs**

In an effort to reach out to more farmers and members of the public, the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) is planning to start more community radio stations.

The university has written to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting seeking permission to start six such stations at the Krishi Vigyan Kendras in Villupuram, Cuddalore, Tiiruvavarur, Nagapattinam, Pudukottai and Virudhunagar districts.

The application was sent more than a month ago and the Ministry was considering the same, sources said.

### **Fund**

Once sanctioned, the varsity would require Rs. 90 lakh to set up the stations. It planned to secure Rs. 65 lakh under the 'Agriculture Technology Management Agency' fund and was working out to meet the balance amount and also the operational cost that included salary and content creation expenses. The radio stations would help in content sharing and bring in variety into programmes.

At present the university had only one station on its campus in Coimbatore catering to listeners within a 20 km radius, the sources said.

### **Programmes**

Since December 2010, the community radio station had been airing programmes for four hours a day – between 10 a.m. and noon and 2 and 4 p.m., repeating the programme in the second transmission, said N. Koma, who manages the station.

The two-hour programme includes interviews with leading farmers, entrepreneurs, transmission of success stories, inputs from experts on crop and pest management. Her team had roped in students to host the programme.

C. Karthikeyan, faculty, Agriculture Extension and Rural Sociology said the students would undergo a course in 'Development

Communication' for which they would visit the radio station to learn about its functioning.

B.Tech. student A.M. Shenaz Parvin said that the 25 programmes she had hosted in the radio station in her two years of study had given her experience that she could not get in classrooms. "I have learnt to improve my communication, make it simple and direct and encourage the guests to talk more."

T. Shanmugam of Vellalore said that he was making good use of the ideas on bee rearing and mushroom cultivation to multiply his income. He's a daily wager at a mill here and was hooked onto the station only a month ago.

### **'Avoid indiscriminate use of pesticides'**

Indiscriminate use of pesticides has potential to affect the health of farmers and consumers because of residual toxicity of them in food products, said J. Diraviam, Director, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Karur.

Speaking at one-day training on Integrated Pest Management, organised by KVK here on Tuesday, he said the tendency of using abnormal level of pesticides should be shunned.

The farmers should switch over to Integrated Pest Management by getting inputs from officials concerned.

Explaining the concept of IPM and its need, he said various methods were available for pest management such as cultural, mechanical, regulatory, biological, botanical, and chemical methods.

If farmers used the methods, they would facilitate them to apply chemicals only at optimum level, thereby preventing toxicity. The farmers should use the less toxic pesticides only as a last resort.

The Assistant Director of Horticulture, Karur Muniyandi, shared his experience in the management of papaya mealy bug on tapioca using parasitoid.

A. Parthiban, NABARD Assistant General Manager, in his special address encouraged the farmers to adopt IPM measures for safeguarding the environment.

Lead District Manager S.M Murugesan, Indian Overseas Bank Rural Self Employment Training Institute Director Dhamayanthi,

and D. Dinakaran, Professor (Plant Pathology), Horticultural College and Research Institute for Women, Tiruchi, spoke.

About 120 participants participated in the training programme. It was organised keeping in mind the need for judicious use of pesticides under the context of the hazards connected with the overuse of chemical pesticides.

***"Farmers should switch over to Integrated Pest Management"***

### **Weekly bazaar for marketing**

Integrated Livestock Producers Association (ILPA), a registered society of KVK, Kancheepuram has initiated a revolutionary marketing concept of "Rainbow weekly bazaar" for marketing agricultural and livestock produce.

The farmers of Kancheepuram District after the skill based training ventured into agriculture and allied enterprises but found it difficult to market their produce individually.

#### **Registered association**

Hence they joined together to form a registered Association so as to facilitate themselves and fellow farmers in production and to market their produce under one umbrella and is the first of its kind in the state wherein a farmers' association has joined hands with KVK to market the farmers' produce.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Kattupakkam, Kancheepuram District is functioning under the administrative control of Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University and has provided adequate space at ATIC campus, Kattangulathur for the farmers to put up stalls and display their produce and products for sale.

In the initial phase, 30 farmers had contributed Rs. 5,000 each to set up temporary stalls at the Bazaar to market their produce.

A project proposal has been submitted to NABARD for erecting stalls with adequate infrastructure.

#### **Boost morale**

"This set up will boost the morale of the farmers , entrepreneurs and rural youth to involve in agricultural and livestock production aggressively. The main objective of the bazaar is to facilitate

marketing of agricultural, livestock produce and value added products of farmers directly to the consumers/fellow farmers without middlemen's involvement." says Dr. P. Kumaravel, Professor and Head Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Kattupakkam.

The market at the KVK – ATIC campus Kattangulathur will function every Saturday from 6.00 a.m to 6.00 p.m.

A wide range of agricultural and livestock products will be available for sale.

For details interested persons can contact the office of the Programme Coordinator & Professor and Head, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Kattupakkam, Kanchipuram District, phone: 044 – 27452371, email: kvkkpm@yahoo.co.in and Mr. L. Ramesh, Secretary, (ILPA), Phone: : 8939963163 / 8925634947.

### **Mobile soil testing unit**

A mobile soil testing unit of agriculture department will visit Suchindram town panchayat office on November 24, Agriculture Extension Centre at Vazhukkamparai on November 25, Therur panchayat office on November 26, Azhagappapuram panchayat office on November 27 and Samithoppu panchayat office on November 28, according to a press release.

### **Farm varsity initiative**

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The application was sent more than a month ago and the Ministry was considering the same, sources said.

Once sanctioned, the varsity would require Rs. 90 lakh to set up the stations. — Staff Reporter

## Governor inaugurates three-day Krishi Mela of UAS-B



A lady arranging millets at the Organic Farming stall during the inauguration of 'Krishi Mela' at Gandhi Krishi Vijnana Kendra. The Mela was organised by the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS-B) on November 19, 2014. Photo: V. Sreenivasa Murthy.

*About five lakh farmers are expected to visit the three-day event*

Governor Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala on Wednesday inaugurated the three-day Krishi Mela of the University of Agricultural Sciences-Bangalore here, with a call for building a water-grid on the lines of power grid to effectively reach water from rivers to farmers' fields.

He stressed the need for treating each farm as an individual watershed for effective utilisation of rain water. He also called upon farmers to adopt the best practices from across the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister of State for Agriculture Krishna Byre Gowda told farmers that the government was committed to bailing out farmers from crisis through market-intervention scheme as and when the prices of crops crashed.

This year's Mela, which is focussing on water conservation and effective utilisation of water in agriculture with a theme of – more crop per drop – is showcasing various water-saving technologies in agriculture.

About five lakh farmers are expected to attend the three-day event that has 600 stalls by various companies and research institutions besides a national exhibition on farm machinery, according to Acting Vice-chancellor D. P. Kumar.

## Over 3,000 tonnes of fertilizers arrive in Nellai

*Farmers from four districts will benefit, says official*

In a bid to increase crop yield and facilitate farmers, a consignment of 3,074 tonnes of fertilizers arrived here on Wednesday.

The consignment of fertilizers of Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited (KRIBHCO) was despatched from Surat and Kakinada through train. Farmers of Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, Kanyakumari and Virudhunagar districts would benefit, Joint Director of Agriculture, C. Chandrasekar, Tirunelveli, told *The Hindu*.

Of this consignment, 1,000 tonnes had been allotted to farmers in Tirunelveli district and another 1,000 tonnes for Tuticorin district. He said 1,500 more tonnes of fertilizers of Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) were expected to arrive in a day.

The fertilizers would be despatched to primary agriculture credit societies across the Tirunelveli district and provided to farmers, who had been confident of raising crops with the considerable amount of rainfall.

Totally, 163 primary agriculture credit societies are functioning across the district. A bag of 150 kg of fertilizer would be sold at Rs.270.50 through such societies and officials would be involved in carefully monitoring the delivery.

To offset the escalating price of fertilizers in private outlets, the State government was extending this facility at regular intervals during monsoon. Pulses would be cultivated on 19,000 ha, millets, mostly maize, on 7,500 ha and cotton on 4,000 ha.

Mr. Chandrasekar said the district recorded its annual average rainfall after a record of 1028.65 mm. During last year, the average rainfall of 814.8 mm was surpassed with a record of 889.13 mm.

In Tuticorin district, the average annual rainfall was 662.2 mm and it received over 550 mm of rainfall so far this year, Joint Director of Agriculture N.K. Dhakshinamoorthy said.

In October, the rainfall was 294.4 mm as against the average of 150.7 mm. So far, 53.3 mm rainfall had been recorded in November, which had an average rainfall of 184 mm, he said.

## **Rs. 67 cr. disbursed as crop loan by Ariyalur PACS**

A sum of Rs. 67.78 crore has been disbursed as crop loan by 64 Primary Agriculture Co-operative Credit Societies (PACCS) in Ariyalur district till October this year.

The PACCS have distributed Rs. 2.39 crore as medium-term loan, Rs. 141.76 crore as jewellery loan, and Rs. 5.93 crore for self-help groups, said A. Saravanelraj, district Collector, on Wednesday.

Speaking at the 61<sup>st</sup> All India Co-operative Week celebrations at Ariyalur, the Collector said there were 84 co-operative societies under the control of Registrar of Co-operatives in Ariyalur district. There were 166 Milk Producers Co-operative Societies, seven housing co-operatives, and 29 weavers co-operative societies.

The Collector distributed shields to co-operative banks and societies for their best performance.

He distributed Rs. 42.02 lakh to 96 persons as medium term loan and Rs. 1.27 crore as loan to women self-help groups.

He distributed prizes to students who won in competitions held in connection with the co-operative week celebrations.

## **KAU to reduce fee for screening vegetables**

*To set up two new labs to facilitate analysis of samples*

Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) has informed the government of its willingness to reduce the fee for screening vegetables and fruits at its state-of-the-art laboratory here to detect the presence of pesticide residue. The Pesticide Residue Research and Analysis Laboratory functioning at the College of Agriculture,

Vellayani, will take up the screening of samples provided by the new authority to be constituted by the government to keep a tab on pesticide contamination in fruits and vegetables brought from other States. The KAU has welcomed the government initiative to form the authority to keep vigil on pesticide content in vegetables brought from other States.

### **Support promised**

Pointing out that the periodic reports furnished by the laboratory had helped enhance public awareness of the hazardous pesticide content in vegetables and fruits available in the market, the KAU said it had agreed to reduce the fee for samples collected by the authority and provide maximum support to the authority. The decision was communicated to the government at a high-level meeting convened by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy here on Tuesday.

- *Welcomes move to form authority to keep vigil on pesticide content in vegetables*
- *KAU's Vellayani lab is the only NABL-accredited public sector lab in State*

### **Attracting youth to agriculture a task**

: Sreenath Dixit, director of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research's Southern Zone Project Directorate, has urged scientists with the Krishi Vigyan Kendra to enhance the quality of technology transfer.

Addressing an orientation programme for scientists with KVKs from southern States here on Tuesday, he said the KVK's initiatives had been effective because it created location-specific technologies and trained farmers in adopting them.

"The needs of farmers should guide research activities in KVKs. Scientists should try to see matters from the point of view of farmers," he said.

"Attracting youth to agriculture is the foremost challenge before farm scientists. Youth will take up farming only if it is remunerative. Let us recall the example set by Varghese Kurien. He inspired



rural milk producers and triggered a white revolution. If an engineer with hardly any knowledge in dairy technology, but armed with tremendous will power, could do this, why cannot we, agricultural scientists, trigger a revolution in the fields? ” he asked.

## **Experts root for decentralised solar power generation**

Decentralisation of solar power generation emerged as a significant suggestion from the speakers at a seminar on ‘Energy Security in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh—Realities and Way Forward’, jointly organised by Banjara Development Society, CARPED, and Human Rights Forum on Wednesday.

Activist and retired IAS officer E. A. S. Sarma noted that solar energy is being centralised, with establishment of plants of more than 500 MW capacities in the offing.

Instead, promoting rooftop panels would reduce Transmission and Distribution losses, besides cutting costs.

K. Raghu, representing the People’s Monitoring Group on Electricity Regulation (PMGER), said solar energy is ideal for agricultural consumption, as the hours of usage are less.

Further, it rules out fuel problem, pollution, and T&D losses if decentralised. Mr. Sarma debunked the Central government’s claim about enormous coal reserves in the country, and cited the Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited (CMPDIL) data, to say that the extractable coal will not last for more than 15 years. He accused government of lacking intellectual honesty.

### **“Destructive politics”**

M. Venugopal Rao from the Centre for Power Studies spoke against the “destructive politics” and faulted the Central government of delaying a solution to the power issues between both States. He suggested cancellation of PPAs and allocation of additional quota to Telangana from central pool. Vice-president of Akhila Bharata Kisan Sabha S.Malla Reddy called attention to the plight of farmers, and said 341 farmers have committed suicide in Telangana till date.

“Farmers do not need free power. Just give them power supply,” he urged, and suggested infrastructural strengthening and appointment of linemen. He accused both governments of resorting to diversionary tactics as they cannot fulfil their electoral promises.

K. Raghu, who is also coordinator of TEEJAC, said the Telangana’s share of 54.89 per cent from all PPAs is in terms of generating capacities, and not merely the actual power produced.

## **Experts call for statutory testing of vegetables**

: A day after the government declared its intention to crack down on sale of unsafe vegetables in the State, experts have called for realistic measures such as regular statutory sample collection and testing as well as steps to trace vegetables sold in the State to their origin.

An official familiar with the developments on Tuesday said the test results cannot be obtained quick enough to prevent the sale of a particular consignment of vegetables. Sure-fire tests take four to five days. The best way, therefore, to ensure safe vegetables in the State is to go back to their origins and take preventive action with the cooperation of the farmers concerned. Once samples from a consignment are found to be contaminated, it is possible to take the help of the Sales Taxes Department to trace the wholesalers and subsequently the farmers, the official said.

An official at Kerala Agricultural University said the most serious problems lay with a few items of vegetables such as curry, coriander and mint leaves, carrot, cauliflower, green chillies and capsicum. These vegetables are mostly got from the neighbouring States. Among vegetables produced in the State, red amaranthus and vegetable cow pea pose the most serious problems of pesticide contamination.

It is learnt that the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has launched collection of statutory samples of vegetables. As a first measure, coriander leaf samples were collected in Kochi last week, FSSAI sources said. They said that samples of more vegetables would be collected in the coming days.

Traders in Tamil Nadu and Kochi are guarded in their reaction to the government decision to take stern action against sale of pesticide-contaminated vegetables in the State.

## **Forum welcomes govt. move to test vegetables for pesticides**

Pokkali Samrakshana Samithi has welcomed the government's move to test vegetables sourced from other States for pesticide contamination.

The forum has also demanded measures to protect the pokkali fields where organic farming has been undertaken over the years.

Francis Kalathungal, general convener of the forum, said that the organic mode of farming that was being practiced was mostly labour-intensive and provided a major source of income for women.

Mr. Kalathungal said certain lobbies responsible for sabotaging the 'one paddy, one fish' scheme of the government. Very little was being done to prevent the intrusion of saline water, thereby making paddy and vegetable cultivations daunting tasks. Such areas were being subjected to excessive fish farming for vested interests. Attempts were being made by certain sections to mislead the public by propagating the falsehood that farming was no longer a profitable endeavour. As a result, the pokkali mode of cultivation faced the threat of going extinct and was being practised only in the coastal areas of Alappuzha, Ernakulam and Thrissur.

The situation had resulted in the loss of a source of livelihood for tens of thousands and agricultural workers and fishermen. Large varieties of vegetables including cow pea, ridge gourd, cucumber, lady's finger, snake gourd and bitter gourd used to be cultivated organically in large quantities in pokkali fields. The forum also urged the government to learn from the mistakes caused by the system of mono-crop cultivation, which has resulted in environmental and other impacts that were being seen in Punjab. The caution raised by noted agriculture scientist K.G. Padmakumar in this regard must be considered with great importance, they said.

## Cup of woes for tea sector as prices fall

With the current average price of south Indian tea down by nearly 16 per cent compared to the same period last year, stakeholders in the tea sector have appealed to the Union and the Tamil Nadu governments to take immediate measures to rectify the situation.

The United Planters' Association of Southern India (UPASI) organised a meeting here on Wednesday of producers, small growers and workers in the tea sector in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to discuss the problems faced by the sector.

Vijayan Rajes, UPASI president, told presspersons after the meeting that the prices are down mainly because of overproduction last year in countries such as Kenya, Sri Lanka and China.

In south India too, production between January and September this year was 178.3 million kg as against 171.9 million kg for the same period last year. Tea prices started falling since April this year. The average price last year was Rs. 101.88 a kg and it is Rs. 84.96 a kg now. However, production cost ranged between Rs. 105 and Rs. 120 a kg, depending on the yield and tea garden. Exports from the south have also declined slightly this year, he has said.

South Indian tea quality is similar to that of Kenya.

The stakeholders have decided to appeal to the Centre to re-constitute and appoint a full-time chairman for the Tea Board so that the issues faced by the sector can be represented. Subsidy amounts under several schemes for the sector should also be released immediately. Buyers in the U.S. or European Union insist on certifications. The Centre should insist in its talks with these countries that the cost of certification should be shared by the buyers too. The Kerala and Karnataka governments should abolish the agricultural Income Tax and the value added tax on tea should be reduced to one per cent in Tamil Nadu, he said.

· *Average price of south Indian tea down by about 16%*

· *South Indian tea quality akin to that of Kenya*

*UPASI chief puts it to overproduction last year in Kenya, Sri Lanka, China*

## Celebration starts, but level stands at 141.65 ft of Mullaperiyar dam



[The Hindu](#) The Periyar dam at Thekkadi.

Cumbum Valley farmers started their grand celebration on Wednesday, though the level in the Mullaperiyar dam did not touch the 142-foot mark, owing to the absence of rainfall in the catchments. It stood at 141.65 feet.

A section of MDMK workers burst crackers at the Penny Cuick Memorial and party general secretary Vaiko, along with farmers, garlanded the statue of the architect of the dam and sprinkled flowers in the Periyar near the Lower Camp.

He also distributed sweets to the public and exchanged greetings. Hundreds of Kerala policemen were deployed at the Kumuli checkpoint to prevent the movement of people from Tamil Nadu to the dam.

Policemen were posted on the roadside at all vantage points at Chinnamanur, Uthamapalayam, Cumbum and Goodalur.

## **A helping hand for farmers**

Moved by the plight of the farmers, a Singapore-based entrepreneur, Amita Dholakia Choudhary, has come forward to extend interest free loans to them.

In collaboration with the Mumbai-based 'Give India' and local NGO 'Sarvodaya Youth Organisation', she proposes to give Rs. 50,000 interest-free loan to 40 farmers in Warangal district.

Sarvodaya secretary P. Damodar said the farmers would utilise the money to buy sheep, cattle and other income generating properties. The identification of genuine farmers in Atmakur, Geesukonda and Sangem mandals is on, he said.

## **Health Minister's assurance pushes up arecanut prices**

*'There is no move to ban production, sale of chewing tobacco'*

The arecanut prices, which had recently slumped, are now recovering, thanks to the State government promising not to impose a ban on the production and sale of chewing tobacco, Kankodi Padmanabha, president of the Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative Ltd. (CAMPCO), has said.

At present, a major chunk of arecanut is consumed along with tobacco. The move to ban chewing tobacco had resulted in a slump in arecanut prices in the second week of November. A delegation of members of cooperative societies of arecanut growers under CAMPCO had met Minister for Health and Family Welfare U.T. Khader and Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs T.B. Jayachandra recently and requested them not to ban chewing tobacco to protect the interests of farmers engaged in the cultivation of tobacco and arecanut. The duo responded positively to the request. Following this, the arecanut prices were recovering, he said at a press conference here on Wednesday.

As lakhs of farmers were cultivating tobacco, the ban should come in phases, after providing them suitable financial help to shift to other crops, he said.

Mr. Padmanabha said the CMPCO members had met Union Minister for Commerce Nirmala Seetharaman and requested her to impose a complete ban on the import of arecanut, and the minister responded positively. The ban would fetch remunerative price for local arecanut varieties, he said.

Vice-president of the Malnad Arecanut Marketing Cooperative Society Narasimha Naik was present.

- *'The prices had started falling after State government resolved to ban chewing tobacco'*
- *Need to enforce the ban on chewing tobacco in phases highlighted*

### **Arrangements for paddy procurement**

The district administration has made arrangements to procure 80,000 metric tonnes of paddy at 81 paddy procurement centres, said in-charge Collector B. Rama Rao said on Wednesday. Of the procurement centres, SHGs were allotted 61 and the remaining to PACS. 'A' grade variety paddy will be procured at Rs. 1,400 and normal variety at Rs. 1,360 per quintal. He said a control room with mobile phone number 9963479145 was opened at the Collector's Office to address problems of farmers during procurement. He appealed to farmers not to depend on middlemen.

### **Need-based crops ensure increased revenue**

An exposure visit organised by the Department of Horticulture has come in handy for the small farmers, who can meticulously decide on the crops to be cultivated and its season so that they can get attractive revenue throughout the year by using small quantity of available water.

"If the crops being selected by the farmers are need-based and market-led crops, it will certainly fetch a comfortable revenue, besides the good yield and revenue from perennial crops,"

according to S. Raja Mohamed, Deputy Director of Horticulture, Tirunelveli.

Horticulture crops have turned out to be a viable source of income generation for rural farmers in the district after monsoon let the agriculturists down for the past five years.

One of the successful small farmers S. Samuel from Kazhuneerkulam in Alangulam block in the district is cultivating mango on about half an acre, curry cucumber ('sambar vellari') and snake gourd on 2 acres under drip irrigation after getting 100 per cent subsidy from the Horticulture Department and mint ('pudhina,' *Mentha virides*), a spicy green with strong pleasant odour in leaves and stems mainly used for flavouring food items, on an acre.

Till 'thai pattam' (January), he gets revenue from mint, followed by curry cucumber and snake gourd from April to May. From June onwards, he gets revenue from Mango.

"It's this style of cultivation that fetches good revenue as he cultivates crops based on market needs.

The exposure visit became an eye-opener for this farmer," said Mr. Mohamed, who visited the 'smart' farmer's holding recently.

"Now, I get Rs. 1,000 to 1,200 every day through selling 30 to 40 kg of mint leaves at the rate of Rs. 30 per kg at Alangulam market. I can maintain 'pudhina' for more than a year. Hence, I get this revenue up to 'thai pattam.' By that time, my curry cucumber will be ready for harvest," says Mr. Samuel.

## **Farmers find a good alternative in Kasturi Benda**

The cultivation of Kasturi Benda (*Abelmoschus moschatus*) medicinal plant is steadily gaining popularity among farmers, particularly those who are vexed with the monkey menace and 'unviable conventional farming'.

Several enterprising farmers have been cultivating the medicinal herb in Kallur, Enkur and a few other mandals in the district over the last few years. Their commercially successful farming venture prompted other farmers to take up the cultivation of Kasturi Benda, the seed of which is used in the preparation of some traditional medicine and in the perfume industry.



N. Rama Krishna, a farmer of Botlakunta village in Konijerla mandal, switched over to Kasturi Benda cultivation in June this year, after suffering a series of losses in cotton cultivation due to drought-like conditions and the monkey menace.

“After my bitter experience with cotton and maize cultivation in the past, I cultivated Kasturi Benda in two acres under the guidance of a veteran farmer of Kallur mandal,” said Rama Krishna.

“Now, monkeys don’t venture into my field as they dislike eating this particular variety of medicinal herb,” he remarked, adding that he is expecting an average yield of 300 to 400 kg per acre.

I am also hopeful of an assured income of at least Rs. 80,000 to Rs. 1 lakh in view of a buy back arrangement with a Karnataka-based firm, he said.

“The Kasturi Benda seed is used in the preparation of traditional medicine for treating nervous disorders, including hysteria,” said J. Marianna, Horticultural Officer, Khammam.

The flowers, roots, leaves, stem and bark of the medicinal herb are also in high demand, he said.

## India tight-lipped on the issue of hydrofluorocarbons

*As the debate is still on, a breakthrough is highly unlikely as oil producing gulf countries oppose the U.S.-led proposal*

India did not clearly spell out its position on the issue of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) during a key UN conference here as nations debated whether to set up a contact group for discussing the proposed amendment to the Montreal Protocol to phase down the harmful greenhouse gas.

As nations debated pro and cons of the issue, India neither supported nor opposed it and instead merely read out a joint-bilateral statement on HFCs signed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Barack Obama during their White House summit on September 30.

When contacted, Indian officials known to the development pointed out that it was done to “clarify” the country’s stand after Canada, while moving the amendment, referred to “a change” in India’s approach on the issue.

India’s unclear stand has irked the green groups attending the conference.

“I can’t understand why a bilateral deal was read out in a multilateral forum,” climate expert and deputy director general of Centre for Science and Environment, Chandra Bhushan, said.

On the opening day of the conference on November 17, India had not opposed to participate in discussing on the agenda on the issue of harmful greenhouse gas under United Nations Montreal Protocol on ozone depleting substances.

As the debate is still on, a breakthrough on the issue of HFCs is highly unlikely as oil producing gulf countries participating in a key UN conference here continued their strong opposition to the U.S.-led nations’ proposal to amend the Montreal Protocol to phase down the harmful greenhouse gas.

During the debate yesterday, oil producing Gulf nations led by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait opposed to setting up a contact group on the issue, arguing that the Montreal Protocol does not have the mandate to deal with the greenhouse gas.

They said that the issue should be discussed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Montreal Protocol is a UN treaty signed in 1987 to ban ozone-depleting substances like chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), which were used in refrigerators and air conditioners.

HFCs were brought into replace the ozone-depleting substances but it was proved later that the ozone friendly gas has a potent warming effect.

During the past six conferences, it was India which had led the Gulf States to block the use of the Montreal Protocol to phase out HFCs.

The change in Indian stand comes in the wake of a joint Indo-US statement on HFCs this year under which both the nations had agreed to discuss the harmful greenhouse gas under the Montreal Protocol. The Gulf countries argued that there were no alternatives to HFCs.

Sensing that evolving a consensus on setting up of a contact group is not easy, the U.S. proposed to setting up of an informal group to discuss the mandate of the contact group and not to discuss the amendment proposal.

China said that the Montreal Protocol has a role to play and everyone should work on consensus.



## Low Vitamin D levels may lead to early death



Vitamin D deficiency can also result in various other diseases leading to an early death, research shows.

Vitamin D deficiency is not just bad for your bone health, it can also result in various other diseases leading to an early death, research shows.

The study based on examination of genes has established for the first time a causal relationship between low Vitamin D levels and increased mortality, the researchers claimed.

“We can see that genes associated with low Vitamin D levels involve an increased mortality rate of 30 percent and, more specifically, a 40 percent higher risk of cancer-related deaths,” said Shoaib Afzal, medical doctor at Herlev Hospital, Copenhagen University Hospital in Denmark.

“An important factor in our study is that we have established a causal relationship,” Afzal added.

When the sun shines on our skin, the skin produces Vitamin D. Evidence suggests that sunshine has a positive effect on our health, but sunburns must be avoided as they increase the risk of skin cancer.

A diet rich in Vitamin D or the intake of Vitamin D supplements can also cover our need to some extent.

The study involved 96,000 people from large-scale population studies in Denmark.

Vitamin D levels were measured using blood samples from the studies, and specific genetic defects were

examined. All participants were followed for mortality from 1976 until 2014.

“Our study shows that low Vitamin D levels do result in higher mortality rates,” Borge Nordestgaard from University of Copenhagen said.

### **Fibre-rich diet helps you lose weight**

Certain fibres contained in prepared foods such as cereals, cereal bars, baking mixes, and drinks may cause a shift towards beneficial bacteria in the gut and assist in weight loss when made part of a long-term, daily diet, says a new research.

The researchers focused on two fibres – polydextrose, which is a common fibre food additive and soluble corn fibre.

“We need more fibre in our diets from lots of different sources,” said Hannah Holscher from the University of Illinois in the US.

“These two fibres look like they could be beneficial when included in a balanced diet along with whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes,” Holscher added.

The researchers found that there were significant shifts in the gut bacterial populations with fibre supplements and

when the supplements were stopped populations seemed to go back to where they were before.

What was most surprising and novel in the recent study was a shift in the Bacteroidetes:Firmicutes ratio towards more Bacteroidetes, something the researchers had not viewed previously.

“This was of particular interest to us because other research works have shown that having more Bacteroidetes may be beneficial because the higher that proportion is, the individual tends to be leaner. With higher Firmicutes, that individual tends to be more obese,” Holscher said.

The researchers used whole-genome sequencing to explore the full range of bacterial genomic information in the gut after fibre supplementation.

Previous research has shown that dietary fibre can also help reduce the risk of colon cancer, type 2 diabetes and other diseases.

The study appeared in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

## weather

INDIAN CITIES

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Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Rain: 0

Humidity: 79

Wind: normal

### Tomorrow's Forecast

Thursday, Nov 20

Max

30°

Min

25°



Partly Cloudy

Sunrise: 06:09

Sunset: 05:39

Barometer: 1014

Friday, Nov 21

Max

31°

Min

25°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday  
Nov 22



31° | 25°

Partly Cloudy

Sunday  
Nov 23



34° | 27°

Partly Cloudy

Monday  
Nov 24



33° | 26°

Partly Cloudy

Tuesday  
Nov 25



32° | 26°

Partly Cloudy

Wednesday  
Nov 26



33° | 27°

Partly Cloudy

## Why non-Basmati brown rice



*In this age of hurried pace, high cholesterol, take away food and extra midriff lard, do you ever want to go back to childhood where weight was nary a worry, cholesterol just a difficult word and food not insecticide-laden or hormone-induced? We all do.*

Don't we all look for childhood? Call it absent-minded coincidence, but one day, I bumped into childhood. No, not by turning the clock. Walking through the aisle of a superstore, I found childhood on the grocery shelf. That stout, brown grain of rice that the khansama (cook) would make for lunch every day. Not pressure cooked. That gooey brown rice that ma would serve with a piping dollop of ghee. I grew up but that aroma lived in my soul.

It is to that aroma of fat, brown rice that I yearned to return to. Not the long-grained Basmati, but the non-Basmati brown rice - unmilled rice which is an excellent source of manganese, selenium, phosphorus, copper, magnesium, and niacin (vitamin B3). Do you know what happens when that hearty brown rice is milled and polished into white? It destroys 67 per cent of vitamin B3, 80 per cent of vitamin B1, 90 per cent of



vitamin B6, half of the manganese, half of the phosphorus, 60 per cent of the iron, and all the dietary fibre and essential fatty acids. So, white rice is essentially refined starch without original nutrients.

Even in brown rice, the non-Basmati brown rice is better than the long grained ones. The basic difference lies in their Glycemic Index (GI); the latter has GI of only 8.6. How does that help? Ask Swapna Chaturvedi, dietician at New Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences and she'll rattle off all the benefits of non-Basmati brown rice. "Its low GI is an extremely healthy option for diabetics, weight watchers, colon cancer patients and heart patients. Its high fibre content keeps blood glucose levels stable and prevents hunger cravings.

Its micronutrients hunger cravings. Its micronutrients make it anti-carcinogenic and anti-inflammatory." Pressure cook the rice. Do not throw the rice whey. Retain the starch. Throwing the whey means discarding all the water-soluble nutrients. Dietician Dr Charu Dua of Pushpanjali Crosslay Hospital, New Delhi, shatters the myth of avoiding rice carbs at night. "Non-Basmati brown rice is great dinner. It fends off hunger cravings; its low GI helps lower blood cholesterol and manage blood sugar levels." The National Cancer Institute recommends 25gm of fibre per day and a cup of brown rice provides almost 3.5gm dietary fibre.

As a kid, I knew nothing about GI and micronutrients in non Basmati brown rice. I didn't know it was good for weight watchers. All I loved was the aroma and its feel-good wholesomeness. I have returned to childhood. To that stout-grained brown rice.

## Smoking ups risk of developing second cancer

*A large study has found that cigarette smoking prior to the first diagnosis of lung (stage I), bladder, kidney or head and neck cancer increases the risk of developing a second smoking-associated cancer.*

"As survival improves for a number of smoking-related cancers, patients are living longer; however, smoking may increase the risk of developing a second smoking-related cancer among these survivors," said Meredith S. Shiels, lead study author and research fellow with the National Cancer Institute's Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics.

Researchers examined data from five cohorts which included 2,552 patients with stage I lung, 6,386 with bladder, 3,179 with kidney and 2,967 with head and neck cancer.

They found that the association between smoking and developing a second primary smoking-associated cancer was similar to the association between smoking and developing a first primary smoking-associated cancer.

Patients who smoked more than 20 cigarettes per day had a 5.41-fold higher risk of developing cancer than individuals who have never smoked.

Notably, current smoking at any level increased the risk of overall mortality across all cancer disease sites.

"Our study demonstrates that health care providers should emphasise the importance of smoking cessation to all their patients, including cancer survivors," Shiels concluded.

The study was published in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

# DECCAN Chronicle

Too much 'junk food' can lead to memory loss



Representational image. (Photo: visualphotos.com)

**Washington:** If you can't resist a burger, you are in trouble as a new study has shown that too much of junk food can destroy your memory, especially of young to middle-aged men.

The research by University of California, San Diego, which is the first to produce clear results on memory impairment, studied around 1,000 healthy men, those who consumed the most trans fats, found in foods like high-fat cakes, pastries, chips and fast foods, showed notably worse performance on a word memory test. The strength of the association remained even after taking into consideration things like age, education, ethnicity and depression.

Lead author Dr Beatrice Golomb studied adults who had not been diagnosed with heart disease, including men aged 20 or older and postmenopausal women. Participants completed a dietary questionnaire, from which the researchers estimated participants' trans fat consumption. To assess memory, researchers presented participants with a series of 104 cards showing words. Participants had to state whether each word was new or a word duplicated from a prior card.

Golomb said that foods have different effects on oxidative stress and cell energy, and they looked at whether trans fats, which have been prooxidant and linked adversely to cell energy, might show the opposite effect. And they did.

Oxidative stress has been associated with the development of diseases such as heart disease and cancer.

Industrial trans fats are artificially produced to turn liquid oils into solids at room temperature and extend food shelf life. They can be found in margarines, fast foods, baked goods, snack foods, frozen pizza, coffee creamers and some refrigerated doughs. The Food and Drug Administration is taking further steps to reduce the amount of artificial trans fats in the U.S. food supply.

The study is presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2014.

## THE HINDU BusinessLine

### Ploughing youth power to rejuvenate paddy farming

**Mangalore, November 19:** It may be just a pilot project of youth cultivating rice on six acres. But it is just a beginning by Rajesh Naik with a few handful of youth. Based on the results of the project, he plans to put to use unused agricultural fields in Karnataka's Kannada district.

Naik, a progressive organic farmer from Dakshina Kannada district, believes in youth power can rejuvenate paddy farming if a community model is followed.

#### **Moment of inspiration**

To begin with, Rajesh Naik is planning the pilot with a few handful of youths on six acres of land this Sunday.

Based on the feedback for this project, he may plan accordingly.

The idea struck him last year when he was presiding over a programme to celebrate rural games in a village near Mangalore.

The event was organised by a youth association.

While participating, he asked the organisers to exhibit the same enthusiasm to rejuvenate farming in the region, and assured his full support.

“Dakshina Kannada district, which was once self-sufficient in paddy production, is now bringing more than three-fourths of its requirement from other regions. That’s when I thought it was apt to focus on paddy cultivation to motivate the youth and rejuvenate paddy farming,” he said.

Though farm land owners have come forward offering around 500 acres for paddy cultivation under this community farming model, he is now focussing on a youth association at Brahmarakootlu village, near the Mangalore-Bangalore highway, for his pilot project.

“The lack of farming has led to the growth of weed in many fields. The land will remain fertile, if it is under cultivation,” Naik said.

## Now, growers in tears as onion turns cheap



Losing flavour Farmers sorting onions on the Hubli-Gadag highway. GRN Somashekar

(In ₹ per quintal)

## Free Fall: Downward trend in onion prices

	Hubli APMC			Bangalore APMC		
	Min	Max	Modal	Min	Max	Modal
Sep-15	300	1,900	1,000	500	2,400	1,850
Oct-01	300	1,750	950	1,200	2,000	1,600
Oct-15	300	1,750	850	400	2,000	1,550
Oct-31	300	1,700	800	200	1,800	1,350
Nov-15	300	1,500	700	100	2,400	1,300

Prices drop to Rs. 8 a kg in Karnataka due to high moisture in crop

**Hubli, November 19:** Vittal Chanappa Gowda, a small farmer from Nandihal near Ramdug in Karnataka's Belgaum district, spent Rs. 1,000 to produce a sack of onion earlier this year. "But I am getting a mere Rs. 250 for each bag (of 60-kg)," he says.

Standing in the dusty Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee yard in Hubli, where he had brought 40 bags to sell, Gowda laments: "Forget profits, I won't be able to recover the costs that I have incurred in harvesting onion."

### Triggering protests

Onion prices have crashed in recent weeks, plunging to as low as Rs. 100 a quintal, triggering protests from farmers in major markets across North Karnataka particularly Hubli and Gadag. Unseasonal rains hit the standing crop, impacting harvest and the quality of produce.

Prices in Hubli are currently ruling at Rs. 800 a quintal against Rs. 1,250 during the same time last year. In Maharashtra's Lasalgaon, which decides prices across the country, onion is currently quoting below Rs. 1,500 a quintal against over Rs. 3,000 last year.

Following protests, the Karnataka Government announced a relief of Rs. 9,000 per hectare, which farmers say is not enough to cover even their cultivation costs. Lured by last year's high returns, farmers in Karnataka brought more land under onion this kharif season. Also, the delayed monsoon aided higher acreage.

Unable to take up the sowing of pulses such as green gram on time due to the delay in monsoon, farmers in the State went in for onion. The acreage is estimated to have increased by 30-35 per cent to around 1.5 lakh hectares. Production is estimated at 1.5 million tonnes.

“We paid almost twice the price for seeds, used the best of inputs and took utmost care of the crop anticipating that prices this year would be as good as last year,” said Mallappa Barker another farmer.

### **Unseasonal rains**

But the unseasonal rains belied the growers’ expectations.

Onion brought to the North Karnataka markets has high moisture content and is not preferred by buyers from other States such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Traders say onion with high moisture gets damaged faster when being transported to far-off places. This is also influencing the prices. Expressing disappointment over their plight, Gowda, in his mid-fifties, says prices of almost every input – fertiliser, seed, diesel, labour, packing and transportation costs – have all gone up in recent years, while prices for many agricultural produce have been plunged. Restrictions imposed on exports of onions are putting pressure on prices.

“The Government should ease the curbs on exports of onions by bringing down the minimum export price (MEP) further,” said Prakash TN Kammaradi, Chairman of the Karnataka Agriculture Price Commission (KAPC).

In August, the Centre had reduced the MEP to \$350 a tonne from \$500 in July. Also, the Government needs to create a “green track” for channelising exports quickly, Kammaradi said.

Onions produced in Karnataka hold the key in maintaining domestic supplies as they arrive in the market between Maharashtra’s rabi and kharif crops, which is normally harvested in November-December.

“Onion harvest in Karnataka coincides with the arrival of North East Monsoon, which is a big challenge to growers in the State,” Kammaradi said.

There is a need to develop cropping pattern to help growers overcome this challenge. Also, he felt that technologies such as

solar driers need to be made available to growers at an affordable cost. KAPC has suggested that the State prevail upon the Centre to come up with a national policy on onion to deal with the related issues.

### **Viability issue**

Meanwhile, exporters say that exports are not viable currently as the price is still higher than those quoted by Pakistan or China. Also, the current produce is not export worthy, said CB Holkar, former NAFED director and an exporter. "We will have to wait for the Maharashtra crop. It has been delayed and will start arriving from December," he said.

*Onion prices have crashed in recent weeks, plunging to as low as Rs. 100 a quintal, triggering protests from farmers in major markets across North Karnataka particularly Hubli and Gadag.*

## **Kerala wakes up to the risks of pesticide in food**

**Kochi, November 19:** Food-deficient Kerala, increasingly worried over the high doses of chemical contamination in its food supplies, is stepping up its guard against pesticide residues in vegetables and fruits coming from other States.

The State government is putting in place measures to lower the level of pesticides, including a proposal to carry out field inspections to create awareness among farmers. Chief Minister Oommen Chandy called a meeting of top officials on Tuesday to discuss the issue. The meeting decided to set up an agency for inter-State coordination so that only safe-to-eat vegetables and fruits would arrive in Kerala. The authority will be headed by Food Safety Commissioner TV Anupama and will include senior officials from several government departments.

### **Serious issue**

"Vegetable contamination is a very serious issue as it causes serious health risks," Anupama told *BusinessLine*. "A Kerala Agricultural University study and our own tests on vegetables procured from the market show high levels of harmful pesticide residues."



She said that a huge chunk of the State's vegetable supplies came from Tamil Nadu and some quantities from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh as well. Farmers there, in their enthusiasm to boost output and increase shelf life, often used pesticides, many of which are banned, in high doses. The Kerala Food Safety Authority has identified 13 vegetables, including curry leaves and chillies, which contained extremely high levels of pesticide residue.

In the recent years, several reports have pointed to the health risks of the vegetables, fruits, meat, chicken, rice and wheat coming to Kerala from other States. Chicken was found containing high levels antibiotics (this would cause resistance to antibiotics in human beings); fish sprinkled with formalin (used to preserve dead bodies); and rice coated with harmful preservatives. Apple and grapes are among the most-contaminated fruits in the market. Endosulfan, a pesticide banned in Kerala, was found to have been extensively used on vegetables and fruits coming from outside.

### **Organic farming**

Media reports about contamination in the past few years have triggered a tiny "grow your own vegetables" movement in Kerala. Farming on house terraces is catching on. A couple of years ago, the Agriculture Department launched a scheme to supply "grow bags" containing seedlings of certain essential vegetables. And, in parallel, an organic vegetable cultivation drive is also on.

### **New crop arrivals to mash potato prices**

**Kolkata. November 19:** Potato prices will start softening next week in major consuming centres such as Delhi as early crop varieties from Punjab and UP are expected to arrive in markets.

The drop in prices may not be significant, though, in Kolkata till the middle of next month, when early varieties such S-6 or Pokhraj produced in the West Bengal will arrive in the markets. Bengal is the second largest potato producing State after Uttar Pradesh.

Senior officials of the West Bengal Coal Storage Association told Business Line that potato prices have ruled unusually firm this year due to delayed arrival of crop from Punjab and Uttar Pradesh in consuming centres.

“Normally Delhi receives nearly 100 truckloads (of 15-16 tonnes each) of fresh crop from Punjab and Uttar Pradesh in second week of November. The arrival has been slow this year. This coupled with low stocks due to crop loss in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and some other States, last year, kept prices firm,” an official said.

Last year, production in the country dropped to 44.03 million tonnes against 45.34 million tonnes a year ago.

The supply situation is expected to start easing from November 25 as more despatches are on their way to markets in Delhi and Assam.

Any softening of prices in consuming centres should also put pressure in West Bengal which exports nearly 40-50 per cent of its 95 lakh tonnes production to other States. West Bengal has not witnessed any crop loss last year.

The wholesale price in Bengal is now Rs. 18 a kg at the cold storage end. The retail price of common Chandrakukhi variety is hovering around Rs. 22 a kg in Kolkata. In Agra, a benchmark for the country, prices are currently ruling at Rs. 1,980 a quintal against Rs. 1,370 during the same period a year ago.

West Bengal has about five lakh tonnes potato inventory and a part of it will be used as seed.

Though the stocks are sufficient to meet the demand till early varieties are harvested, the market sentiment is bullish due to delayed arrival of fresh crop from Punjab.

“We don’t expect any significant decline in prices in West Bengal till December,” the source said.

Interestingly, high prices led to about 10 per cent higher sowing of the tuber across the country this season. However, it remains to be seen if it can translate into higher production as potato is a highly weather sensitive crop.

## Tamil Nadu on 'Mission Banana'

Planning to globally market the fruit under a brand name

**Madurai, November 19:** The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Tamil Nadu Banana Growers Federation (TNBGF) will be submitting soon, a 'Mission Banana' document to the State and Union governments to devise a plan of action to market under the brand name 'Tamil Nadu Banana' worldwide.

MS Srinivasa Reddy, CII representative and co-Chairman, Tamil Nadu Banana Festival, speaking to reporters along with AP Karuppaiah and G Ajeethan, President and General Secretary, TNBGF, at Tiruchi, said that based on the outcome of two editions of Tamil Nadu Banana Festival held in 2012 and 2013 and an intensive study, a document has been prepared to get the support of State and Central governments on banana cultivation, preservation and marketing with an eye on export under the brand name 'Tamil Nadu Banana' in other countries.

### Third edition

The third edition of CII Tamil Nadu Banana Festival will be held on December 20 and 21 in Tiruchi, he added.

Karuppaiah said that the underlying theme of the festival would be "from bunches to boxes" and the thrust would be on post harvest processes and value addition of banana and banana products.

A proposal to float a Tamil Nadu Banana Producers Company Ltd on the first day of the conference is under consideration and the company would market the produce of its members to get better price, added Ajeethan.