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# THE HINDU

More crop yields adding more CO<sub>2</sub> to atmosphere



[The Hindu](#)CO<sub>2</sub> absorbed by plants during spring and summer is released back to the atmosphere in autumn and winter.

A sharp rise in food production to meet the demands for rising population accounts for as much as 25 per cent of the seasonal increase in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), finds new research.

The carbon dioxide absorbed by plants during spring and summer as they convert solar energy into food is released back to the atmosphere in autumn and winter.

It is not that crops are adding more CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere; rather, if crops are like a sponge for CO<sub>2</sub>, the sponge has simply gotten bigger and can hold and release more of the gas, the study noted.

“This is another piece of evidence suggesting that when we (humans) do things at a large scale, we have the ability to greatly influence the composition of the atmosphere,” said co-author of the

study Chris Kucharik from University of Wisconsin-Madison in the US.

With global food productivity expected to double over the next 50 years, the findings should be used to improve climate models and better understand the atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> buffering capacity of ecosystems, the researchers pointed out.

“Global climate models do not represent the important details of agro-ecosystems and their management very well,” Mr. Kucharik added.

The study found that, while the area of farmed land has not significantly increased, the production efficiency of that land has. Intensive agricultural management over the last 50 years has had a profound impact.

Mr. Kucharik attributes this to improvements in plant breeding, post-World War II fertilization innovations, irrigation and other human-powered technologies.

The study appeared in the journal *Nature*.

## **Samba, thaladi planned on 4,500 hectares**

Transplantation of samba and thaladi crops are going on in full swing in Karaikal and the agriculture department expects to achieve the coverage target within a week due to timely onset of northeast monsoon.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, the Additional Director for Agriculture, K.Mathiazhagan, said the department has expected to cover samba and thaladi crops on over 4,500 hectares in different parts of the district and the farmers had already raised the crops on over 4,000 hectares so far. The remaining area would be covered within a week due to conducive weather. In the first week of October, paddy fields in the low-lying areas were inundated due to heavy rain. However, officials of the agriculture department swung into action to supply seedlings to farmers to take up transplantation afresh.

There are 11 'Uzhavar Udaviyagams' (Farmers' Aid Centres) in different parts of the district and an official in the rank of Agriculture Officer has been deputed to extend technical aid and other assistance to the needy farmers with an intention to achieve good yield during the samba and thaladi seasons. The Agriculture Department has distributed 100 tonnes of urea to farmers so far.

## **Rs. 180 crore disbursed as agriculture loan: Minister**

*Proposal to construct more godowns, he says*

Agriculture loans to the tune of Rs. 180 crore have been disbursed so far this year to farmers with small holdings, said Environment Minister Thoppu NN.D. Venkatachalam here on Wednesday.

The loans have been forwarded to as many as 27,473 farmers, the Minister said speaking at the All India Cooperative Week Celebrations organised at district-level.

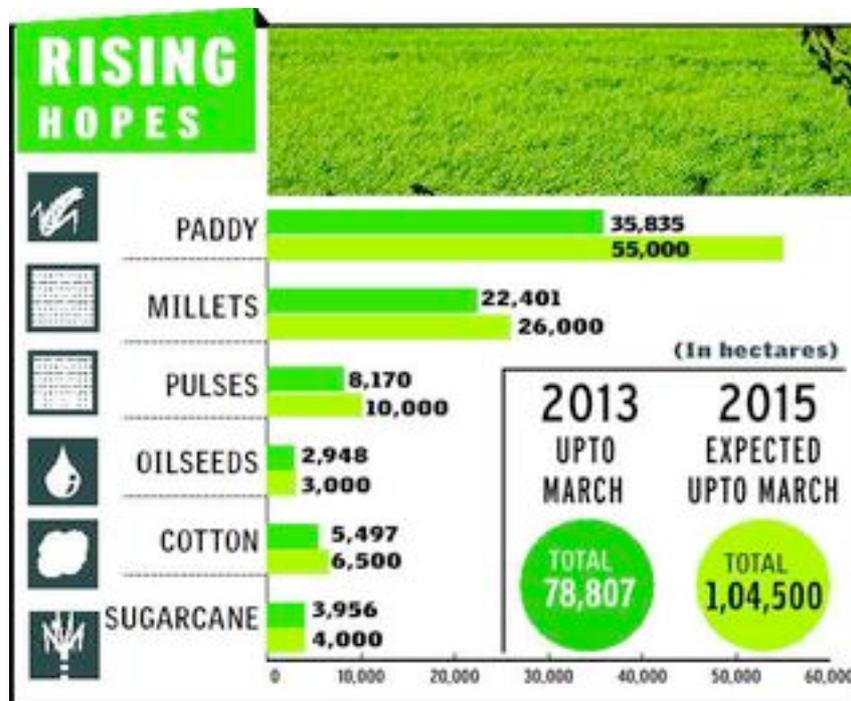
### **Exceeds target**

Honouring cooperative unions that had excelled during the last year with prizes, the Minister said last year crop loan disbursement of Rs. 197.71 crore was achieved against a target of 183 crore. Likewise, loans to the tune of Rs. 77.10 crore have been granted to women self-help-groups for undertaking income-generation activities during this year so far, Mr. Venkatachalam said.

The Minister also informed that a proposal for constructing additional godowns has been forwarded to the government. District Collector S. Prabakaran; Erode Mayor Malliga Paramasivam; Joint Registrar of Cooperatives Ramadoss; and other senior officials took part.

## Area under cultivation expected to grow

*Agriculture official attributes it to favourable monsoon in the district*



More area is expected to come under cultivation in the district by March 2015 when compared to last year, Department of Agriculture has predicted.

While paddy was cultivated in 35,835 hectares last year, the prediction for 2014-15 indicates that nearly 55,000 hectares of land will come under paddy cultivation by March. “We see a rise in land under cultivation because the monsoon has been favourable in the district. While the total rainfall received in 2013 was 615.72 mm, as of November 7 this year the district has received 666.92 mm,” Jaisingh Gnanadurai, Joint Director of Agriculture, said.

While the prediction for cultivation of paddy, millets, pulses, oilseeds, cotton and sugarcane for March 2015 is high when compared to March 2014, the area under cultivation till October remains low. While the area under paddy cultivation in October 2013 was 17,329 hectares, the figure for October 2014 stands at 10,877 hectares.

“Many farmers in Melur, Kottampatti and Tirumangalam are yet to start paddy cultivation since they are expecting more rains and waiting for the tanks to fill up. But with the storage in Mullaperiyar

dam nearing 142 feet, many farmers in the Periyar ayacut in Melur have commenced farm activities,” Mr. Jaisingh said.

A production target of 3.16 million tonnes has been fixed for paddy cultivated in an area of 62,100 hectares. While a production target of 1.36 million tonnes has been fixed for millets raised in an area of 62,700 hectares, the target for pulses in 10,893 hectares is 8,474 million tonnes.

## Compensation sought as paddy harvesters go kaput

*Kuttanad Development Agency has recommended govt. to pay Rs. 20,000 per acre to farmers*



Six of the nine available combine harvesters belonging to the district panchayat are not in working condition.

: The Kuttanad Development Agency has recommended the State government to compensate paddy farmers of Neelamperoor with Rs. 20,000 per acre for agricultural losses incurred due to malfunctioning combine harvesters.

According to vice-chairman of the government-constituted agency, Veliyanad Mathachan, the harvest in nearly 400 acres of the Kozhichal Thekku padasekharam, coming under the Neelamperoor Krishi Bhavan, has been severely affected due to the non-availability of harvesters.

Result: the harvesting for the *puncha* season which should have been wrapped up in 120 days from the time of sowing was yet to be concluded even after 180 days.

The delay in harvesting has resulted in widespread damage to paddy. While the paddy fields provided paddy in the range of 25 to 30 quintals per acre, the procurement has fallen drastically to 10 quintals per acre. As a result, the farmers stood to lose nearly Rs. 21,000 per acre from what they would have received had the machines functioned without defects. To help farmers tide over the unexpected crisis, the government must provide adequate compensation immediately to those farmers who were able to provide less than 10 quintals of paddy per acre, Mr. Mathachan said.

He said compensations must be disbursed on the basis of the documents issued by the Supplyco at the time of procurement. This would prevent corruption, he said.

Elaborating on the difficulties faced by paddy farmers, Mr. Mathachan said six of the nine available combine harvesters were not in working condition. The machines belong to the district panchayat. He claimed the machine operators begin work only by 11 a.m. and mostly left the fields by 4 p.m., thereby delaying the harvest operations.

District Collector N. Padmakumar, who is also the chairman of the agency, has assessed the situation and directed the officials to expedite the process in the remaining areas that were yet to be harvested, Mr. Mathachan added.

## Procurement centres to buy ragi, jowar from Monday



FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

Procurement centres will start buying farmers' produce at four Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs) in Mysuru district from Monday. The centres will buy ragi and jowar at a support price of Rs. 2,000 a quintal fixed by the government.

Deputy Director of Food and Civil Supplies K. Rameshwarappa told *The Hindu* that all arrangements for the launch had been made.

Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation had been appointed as the agency for purchasing ragi and jowar, he said.

Mr. Rameshwarappa said government permission was being awaited for purchasing paddy and maize at support price. "On getting approval, the same procurement centres will start buying maize and paddy," he said. The task force at the taluk-level must meet every Monday and send a status report on the purchases to the district-level task force, he said. "Managers and other authorities at the procurement centres should buy produce from farmers. Middlemen should be kept out of the centres," he told a

meeting here on Wednesday. Mr. Rameshwarappa said directions had been issued to take steps to ready warehouses of the Karnataka State Warehousing Corporation and the private warehouses for storing foodgrains purchased from farmers.

### **Coop. societies exceed crop loan target**

Rural Industries Minister P. Mohan gave away financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 1.17 crore to 71 beneficiaries at the Cooperative Week celebrations held on the premises of the Central Cooperative Bank here on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion the Minister said that the exposure of the cooperative banks to crop loans was growing year after year.

He said that as many as 18 Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACs) had given away Rs. 1.17 crore assistance to the farmers for the purpose of deepening the farm wells, purchase of power tillers and so on.

Since the cooperative societies were playing a pivotal role in improving the rural economy the government had taken measures to revive the sick societies, he added. All over the State there were 23 central cooperative banks and 4,530 PACs besides one State-level cooperative society.

These societies had exceeded the target of Rs. 4,500 crore crop loans fixed till March 31, by giving away crop loans to the tune of Rs. 4,716.16 crore.

For the current financial year 2014-2015 a crop loan target of Rs. 5,000 crore had been set for the cooperative sector.

Of this a sum of Rs. 3,252.74 crore was already disbursed to over 6.34 lakh farmers.

To enable the farmers to store their produce and to get loan on the stock the government had set up 3,317 godowns, with total storage capacity of 4,11,300 tonnes, at a cost of Rs. 379.79 crore.

In Villupuram district 25 PACs and three marketing societies on the hilly terrain had been set up to render efficient service to the farming community and others, Mr. Mohan said.

***For 2014-2015 fiscal a crop loan target of Rs. 5,000 crore has been set***

## **Interest group maximises profit for farmers**

Members of the Mahadevi Farmers' Interest Group involved in cultivating small onions at Velampatti village in Thathaiyengarpet in the district have started reaping the benefits of directly dealing with traders, thanks to the initiative of the Department of Agriculture Marketing and Agri Business. This link helps traders get around middlemen by providing direct tie-up between traders and producers. For long, these small farmers largely relied on commission agents to sell their produce.

The farmers' interest group floated by the department a few years ago now helps traders visit the fields of the group members to purchase their produce directly from the field.

On Wednesday, R. Natarajan, one of the members of the group, sold five tonnes of shallots to a trader from the adjoining Namakkal district. The sale fetched the farmer Rs. 27 a kg, said Mr. Saravanan, president of the group.

### **Spot payment**

"The farmer was able to get Rs.1.35 lakh right at his field that too in a hassle-free transaction," said R.Chandrasekaran, deputy director, Department of Agriculture Marketing and Agri Business. The trader visited the field at Velampatti village and the transaction was effected immediately.

"It saves time and money for the producer who otherwise has to incur additional expenditure of taking the small onions to the commission agents," Mr. Chandrasekaran said and added that similar trader visits would be organised in Uppiliyapuram block soon.

## Fresh stock of urea to meet demand for second crop



All-out efforts:Collector Sajjansingh R. Chavan taking a look at a field where cultivation of paddy has been taken up as second crop in Shenbagaramanpudur village in Kanyakumari district on Thursday.

A fresh stock of 750 metric tonnes of urea arrived in Kanyakumari district to meet the demands of farmers during second crop cultivation that began a fortnight ago, said Collector Sajjansingh R. Chavan here on Thursday.

Addressing reporters at Floriculture Research Station in Thovalai, Mr. Chavan said the department had enough stock of fertilizers, including urea, Di-Ammonium-Phosphate (DAP), MOP and Complex, at all the PACS.

As the farmers had started second crop cultivation, 874 tonnes of urea, 423 tonnes of DAP, 181 tonnes of MOP and 360 tonnes of Complex Fertilizers were distributed. Fresh stocks of urea were dispatched to the PACS from Tirunelveli.

Of the target area of 16,900 hectares for paddy cultivation during the second crop, farmers had started cultivating on 11,686 hectares, he added.

E. Sakku (65), a farmer from Rethinapuram, got a subsidy of Rs.99,000 under the Western Ghats Integrated Farming System Unit to purchase two milch cows, 11 sheep, 30 hens, create drip irrigation facilities, farm pond, vermi-compost unit and raise fodder

and fruit crops. He said he spent Rs.1.5 lakh for the project and was happy to earn his livelihood.

N. Devadoss, a farmer from Thidal, got Rs.4,65,500 as subsidy to set up a 'polygreen house' for cultivating marigold flowers and vegetables on a rotation basis under the National Horticulture Mission (NHM).

The engineering wing of agriculture department undertook various works, including conservation of soil in places such as wired check dams and check dams, at an estimated cost of Rs.1.26 crore this financial year. A wire mesh check dam had been constructed at Thidal village during last financial year at a cost of Rs.45,000.

A sum of Rs.3,04,480 was released to Arim Stellabai of Azhagiapandipuram in Thovalai taluk as subsidy for commissioning a 5 HP solar powered pump set. Ten beneficiaries were selected for the scheme, and once the fund was received from the government, it would be disbursed to them, the Collector said.

Farmers could make use of the unit daily for four hours, as the motor could pump about 70,000 litres per day, he added. Pon Kaathaperumal, Joint Director, Elango and K. Kalavathy, Deputy Directors of Agriculture Department, P. Sivakumar, Assistant Director, Horticulture Department, and P. Nainar, Professor and Head, Floriculture Research Station, TNAU, were present.

## **Mullaperiyar level touches 142 feet**

After a gap of three-and-a-half decades and a relentless judicial battle, the level in the Mullaperiyar dam touched the 142-foot mark around midnight on Thursday.

PWD officials said the level was expected to cross 142 feet soon. Rain was more than moderate in the dam site since the evening, and the inflow was also good, they said. In the afternoon, they had reduced the discharge to the lowest.

But celebrations started in Cumbum. Farmers burst crackers at Goodalur and Cumbum and distributed sweets. Even the PWD officials decorated the Pennycuick Memorial with lights and displayed a multi-colour signboard, mentioning the achievement.

The Theni District Farmers Association described it as a historic day, and the excess water could be utilised to store 1,485 tanks in five southern districts.

The level touched the 136-foot mark on November 4. In the next 17 days, it reached 142 feet, thanks to the torrential rains in the catchments last week.

## **Subsidy to farmers in Ariyalur for cultivating tuber**

The district administration has asked farmers to come forward to avail themselves of subsidy for cultivation of “Kanvali kizhangu” (*gloriosa superba*), a medicinal herb, in Ariyalur district.

Normally, cultivation of this herb was taken up on 250 acres of land in Senthurai, T.Pazhur, and Jayamkondam areas. Colchicine, an alkaloid derived from the seeds of the creeper, is used for preparing Ayurvedha and Unani drugs. A subsidy of Rs.68,750 is given per hectare for the cultivation of this herb. Farmers can register their names by producing computer chitta, adangal, copies of ration card, bank savings account book with Assistant Director of Horticulture in their respective areas for getting subsidy, said A.Saravanelraj, District Collector.

## **Reduce protein intake in feeds, poultry farmers told**

With the sky expected to remain cloudy over the next three days, poultry farmers were asked to reduce protein in chicken feed.

A weather advisory bulletin from Agromet Field Unit of Veterinary College and Research Institute and Regional Meteorological Centre, Chennai, said that the prevailing temperature will pave way for increase in feed intake in the poultry.

This will increase the egg weight in adult birds, but will reduce egg shell quality. Hence poultry farmers are asked to reduce protein and ensure minimum Vitamin D in layer chicken feed.

Since farmers who have cultivated green gram and black gram as rain fed crops, can see mosaic diseases transmitted by white fly. Hence they are asked to spray monocrotophos or methyl demeton at the rate of 200ml for 100 litre an acre.

## Tomato price nosedives

*Bumper harvests following good rains*



Problem of plenty: Bumper harvests in local farms and huge arrival from outside make tomato dirt cheap in the Velanthavalam market. –Photo: K.K. Mustafah

Bumper harvests in local farms coupled with huge inflow from neighbouring States saw tomato prices plummeting in the Velanthavalam market, which controls vegetable distribution in central Kerala. Priced over Rs.17 for a kilogram till last week, all varieties of tomato have become dirt cheap over the last three days.

According to farmers, good rains yielded bumper crops in the farms of Vadakarapathi, Eruthempathy and Kozhinjampara grama panchayats. Hybrid varieties from Andhra, Mysore, Ottamchathram, Pazhani, Dindigul and Erode also flooded the market. The Velanthavalam market has been witnessing the arrival of over 60 tonnes of tomatoes a day for the last one week. It was hardly 30 tonnes in the previous week.

## Farmers' plight

The farm gate price of a 15-kg box of tomatoes has plummeted to Rs.60 this week in the tomato farms of the three panchayats. Many farmers are allowing the ripe tomatoes to rot to avoid labour charges for plucking them.

According to K. Sivapraksha, a farmer from Eruthempathy, the expense for cultivating an acre of tomato would come around Rs.50,000. Transportation to Velanthavalam is an additional cost.

Many farmers have taken huge bank loans.

"Tomato cultivation is profitable only if the farm price of a 15-kg box fetches at least Rs.120. Currently, we are not able to meet the expenses of farming," said M. Shanmughan, another farmer from the region.

"The production is high when compared with previous years. Better irrigation facilities and unexpected rains have contributed to the high yield," said M. Sashikumar, a merchant at Velanthavalam.

The Velanthavalam market is regulating supply to Malappuram, Kozhikode, Thrissur and Ernakulam.

***Bumper harvests in local farms and huge arrival from outside make tomato dirt cheap in Velanthavalam market***

## 'Sirukizhangu' grows to be the farmer's choice



Farmer S. Gomathinayagam showing 'Sirukizhangu' cultivated on his field at Manthiyoor village near Kadayam.

With good rainfall, cultivation of Sirukizhangu (*Coleus parviflorus*), also known as Chinese potato, has yielded the desired results for the farmers of Ambasamudram taluk in the district. Since Sirukizhangu became the choicest horticultural crop among farmers of Kadayam, Ambasamudram and Pappakudi blocks, its cultivation increased considerably over the last year. This year, the area under cultivation of this crop has gone up to an extent of 300 hectares, whereas it was only 160 ha during the last year, according to Deputy Director of Horticulture S. Raja Mohammed, Tirunelveli.

Conducive agroclimatic conditions, especially red sandy soil with good drainage, water resources, photoperiodic response and positive activation of tuber development, humid warm weather during the vegetative phase with cool and dry weather during tuber development period, have all together contributed to the success. "It is a herbaceous annual crop, spreading or prostrate with succulent stem. Unlike other tuber crops, this is a transplanted vegetable. The tubers are rich source of carbohydrate. The African-origin plant is also grown in India, Sri Lanka and along the Indo-China border. The optimum temperature for the growth and development ranges from 25 to 30 degree Celsius," he said. A well drained loamy soil health condition with a pH range of 5.5 to 7 would be ideal for the tuberization. Tubers could be harvested in five months after planting, he told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

Farmers of these blocks preferred this 180-day crop, since it required less water when compared to other crops. Moreover, the farmers were also content with a better market price at Alangulam and Pavorchathram.

S. Gomathinayagam, a successful farmer of Manthiyur village, Kadayam block, said he was harvesting the crop cultivated on two acres during late April and expecting about 14 to 15 tonnes of yield. "The crop fetches a good price of Rs. 26 per kilo at the Pavorchatram market. About 60 to 70 kilograms of tubers are being sold daily."

## CO2 emissions must be nil by 2070 to prevent disaster: U.N.



REUTERS An environmental activist anchors a large balloon in a 2009 file photo.

The world must cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to zero by 2070 at the latest to keep global warming below dangerous levels and prevent a global catastrophe, the U.N. warns.

By 2100, all greenhouse gas emissions — including methane, nitrous oxide and ozone, as well as CO<sub>2</sub> — must fall to zero, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report says, or the world will face what Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) scientists have described as “severe, widespread and irreversible” effects from climate change.

### Finite carbon budget

The UNEP report published on Wednesday is based on the idea that the planet has a finite ‘carbon budget’. Since emissions surged in the late 19th century, some 1,900 Gigatonnes (Gt) of CO<sub>2</sub> and 1,000 Gt of other greenhouse gases have already been

emitted, leaving less than 1,000 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub> left to emit before locking the planet in to dangerous temperature rises of more than 2C above pre-industrial levels.

Jacqueline McGlade, UNEP's chief scientist, told *The Guardian* that scientific uncertainties about the remaining carbon budget had diminished and the real uncertainty now was whether politicians had the will to act.

"The big uncertainty is whether you can put enough policies in place from 2020-2030 — in the critical window — to allow the least-cost pathways [to lower emissions and temperatures] to still stand a chance of being followed," she said. "The uncertainties have shifted from the science to the politics."

All scenarios in the UNEP report now require some degree of 'negative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions' in the second half of the century, through technologies such as carbon capture and storage or, possibly, controversial, planetary wide engineering of the climate known as geo-engineering. UNEP is "extremely interested" in the subject and is planning a report in the months ahead.

Consideration should also be given to compensatory schemes for investors in fossil fuels companies to address the 'stranded assets' issue, Ms. McGlade added.

She acknowledged "donor fatigue" ahead of a pledging conference for the Green Climate Fund on Thursday — which has so far racked up close to \$10bn (£6.4bn) — and called for up to 20 per cent of the final money pot to come from citizen bonds for local environment projects, with the remaining 80 per cent split between public and private sources.

Maroš Šefèoviè, the European Commission's vice-president for energy union told a Brussels press conference that the report would be of use in preparing bloc positions for next month's Lima climate summit.

The EU has not, however, supported UNEP's call for zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2100 .

## Climate neutrality

Christiana Figueres, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)'s executive secretary, said: "This important report underscores the reality that at some point in the second half of the century, we need to have achieved climate neutrality — or as some term it zero net or net zero — in terms of overall global emissions." A key theme in the emissions gap study is the cost-effectiveness of taking early action and the dangers of not doing so. — © Guardian Newspapers Limited, 2014



## Holy Smoke is here to light up the culinary sky



The wall mural at Holy Smoke

It happened. And we didn't even have to sacrifice to Great Cthulhu. Holy Smoke, which just raised shutters in Gurgaon, gives us the meaty mainstay we have been waiting for. The space is explicitly carnivorous, from the

butcher hooks hanging from a faux rail to the monumental bar supported by moulds of very real goat carcasses to the severely industrial abattoir interiors. The entire scene is dominated by a massive mural of an eldritch bull, attired like a Texan tycoon and dining on a bounty of its brethren, and an open kitchen, complete with “Walter” a smoking oven, capable of holding four suckling pigs. Essentially it’s our Daliesque vision of heaven.

The menu is as brawny as the surroundings with vegetarian options appearing as mere extras in a cast which is a medley of meats red, white and pink as well as piscine. There is an elaborate sliders’ menu, boasting around 20 variants, available in er, slides of three and six apart from a slew of starters and mains. The liquor license is just about to lurch in, with a sheet of shakes acting as the filler.

We start with the sliders, a set of three: The Classic Cheeseburger, Sloppy Joe and Char Su. It would be superfluous to try and qualify the flavours captured thus; suffice to say there is no way back from this slide. Whether it’s the debauched pork in the char su or the well-ground beef patty fortified with apple smoked bacon, grain mustard and ketchup which makes up the cheeseburger,

the sliders more than compensate for their stature from a sheer exuberance of taste.

The Buffalo Wings are mammoth and the colour of a San Antonio sunset, with a flaming spice index well-tempered by twin oasis' of blue cheese and ranch dressing. These are easily the best of their kind in the city and our future benchmark for all things buffalo.

Then there are the ribs; the mainstay of any BBQ establishment. They come on a slate-like slab, looking almost dry and prosaic. And then you bite in; leading to a supernova of flavours in your mouth, better than Nolan could capture it in 3D. The pork is charry and firm on the outside and melting and fatty on the inside with an insidious taste of smoked apple. The apple doesn't dominate the dish so much as meld into it, leading to R-rated sounds of appreciation. If the hallmark of a good meal is the silence accompanying it, Holy Smoke delivers an experience similar to a meeting of Trappists.

Meal for two: Rs 2,500 (including taxes, excluding alcohol)

Address: First floor, Cyber Hub, Gurgaon. Contact: 3310608

## From Aamti to Vada Pav: A slice of simple yet exotic Maharashtrian cuisine



Here's how you can define Maharashtra cuisine - Addictive. Potent Drug. Sinfully Spicy. Unforgettable.

Addictive. Potent Drug. Sinfully Spicy. Unforgettable. Here is a slice of the simple yet unabashedly exotic Maharashtra's cuisine.

You can always know a Maharashtra neighbour by the whiff of aamti. A rather simple yet tasteful preparation of lentils (dal), it is one of the few Maharashtra dishes that emerged from the Vidharbha region and went straight up to Goa, and some parts of Southern Karnataka too. Thanks to its simplicity – even a girl of eleven can make it with ease – the dal today has over 51 different versions, and none of it involves any complexity of chopping or grinding.



Aamti, a rather simple yet tasteful preparation of lentils (dal), it is one of the few Maharastrian dishes that emerged from the Vidharbha region

Such was the popularity of this comfort simple dal that Maharaja Shivaji – one of the true blue blood king to rule Maharashtra –learnt not only how to make it, but also made it a part of his army energizing meal. It was a great source of protein, easy to carry and could be made with meager resources.

However, aamti isn't the only legendary dish that has a history to it. The vada (of the Mumbai famous vada pav) is yet another revolutioniser. A breakfast staple from Mumbai to Nasik to Alibaug and further, the vada was a Thursday special when the fish eating Pune Saraswat Brahmin didn't get his meat dose. But it wasn't till Bal Keshav Thackeray put it inside the Irani bun and distributed

among his party workers, that vada pav really became VADA PAV- today a signature dish that the financial city is known for. Till then vada was a “sukkha nashta” (dry breakfast) served to traders on the move. A Gaud Saraswat cuisine specialty, the vada tells the story of its city through its filling.

From the ordinary batata masala, a staple in Mumbai and nearby areas, the vada’s filling takes on the quintessential coconut batata masala as you start heading to the coastal region of the Maharashtra, which is known much for its local vegetarian fare as it is known for its lip-smackingly addictive fish and meat fare. The rise of vada pav led to the rise of its other brethrens like the famous Kutchi Dabeli and Usal and Missal. The former, a Kutch delicacy, was later transformed by adding spicy chutney and sev to make it more Mumbai-ishtyle. Of course Mumbaikars did their own addition of spices and onions to make the dish more addictive.

The rise of vada pav led to the rise of its other brethrens like the famous Kutchi Dabeli and Usal and Missal[/

However, more than these famous snacks, what Maharashtra is really known for is its non-vegetarian cuisine, especially the variety of fish preparation that

bears a fond resemblance to the cooking style down south. Like the use of fresh grated coconut and coconut milk. The use of both fresh and dried kokum for the added tanginess; and, the coconut vinegar, which is omnipresent in most of the Goan dishes today. A reason for this could be the coastline that Maharashtra shares with most of the other states, or as food historians point towards – the ‘make’ of the Maharastrian cuisine. Unlike other state cuisines, Maharastrian cuisine is a confluence of number of communities that made the state their home at different times like the Malvani, the Konkani Goan and Gaud Saraswat Brahmin cuisines. Later of course there has been an addition of Parsi (patra nu machchi and chicken farcha), the Bori, Irani and East Indian community. The most influential however has been the Konkani, the Malvani and of course the Saraswat Brahmin cooking style that have made most of the Maharashtra culinary fare today.

Take for instance the bombil fry, which has come from the Saraswat community, for whom fish isn't just another food from the sea, but a blessing from God. For centuries, fish was an integral part of every Saraswat Brahmin's life. Such was the attraction towards fish, that each son or daughter born in the community was first taught about the

fish and its importance. In fact, history speaks about a time when a Saraswat Brahmin girl's talent was judged by how crispy her fried fish was. The barometer was simple: crispy from the outside and soft inside. The addition of rava (semolina) came to bring in more fishes into the fried genre. Oyster, which they called sea fruit, and crab curry was yet another innovation of the Saraswat clan, just like the numerous bhaji and saag (green leafy vegetable). The Kokum Khadhi, known for its tanginess, was yet another Saraswat gift to the Maharastrian cuisine, along with numerous pickles and papads.

The dried fish dishes, unlike much believed, is a Saraswat discovery, given that Brahmins back in time could neither till the land nor fish, and this became a way that they could regularly satiate their cravings for fish. Later on the Koli community, the first residents of Mumbai, took the tradition of drying fish to the tide over the monsoons, and periods of dry spell. Fish otherwise for Koli (fisherman community) people had a different albeit interesting existence. Exposed to both a variety of fishes and spices, theirs was more of gourmet style cooking. Even the fried fish had masala that were akin to those used in a rasa (curry). It was a brilliant form of cooking, given that unlike Saraswat, the Konkani and Malvani community enjoyed a fiery palate

for dishes that were known for the spiciness of hot chillies along with sweetness of coconut and tanginess from kokum. It was on this base that most of the Goan dishes are based – especially the famous Goan Fish Curry, which isn't as hot as the koliwada fish or the Malvani seafood variety, but has the three essential qualities – spiciness, tanginess and sweetness, all in equal proportion. Most of Maharastrian cuisine started mostly as a fish-base dish before it was adapted for other forms of meat – especially chicken—in the later years. The reason for this was simple: Maharastrian cuisine was based on the principle of utilising local produce. Result, while the mix of spices and use of kokum and other souring agent with coconut remained the same – only in the North dry coconut took place of the fresh one – the style of cooking and main ingredients changed shape. So Malvani Fish Curry, by the time it reached the mainland of Pune, incorporated chicken as a main ingredient. Fish Koliwada, which was popularised by the immigrants of Pakistan, had a prawn variation too. And Kavda Curry, an extremely delicious dish made of a local Konkani bird called 'Khavda' had both a kurli (crab) and chicken variety. What differentiated the dishes besides the change of the main ingredients, which was according to the local produce, was also the

spiciness. While Kohlapuri dishes were known for firing the taste buds, Malvani had a more palate coating experience. The other difference was the accompaniment. Like the belt of Alibaug was known for growing great quality of tendli and saag and eventually vegetarian dishes like avre bendi became a part of the meal served here. Khatkhate became the Goan vegetarian option. Made of seasonal exotic vegetables, it was one of the special stews made to celebrate weddings, anniversary and great occasions. Incidentally, Khatkhate in Maharashtra suffers from a mistaken identity.

While the goan variation is a stew prepared during occasions, head towards Malvan and it becomes a ladu (sort of croissant), which is dry and crispy and had as breakfast. Yet another fine example is the ukadiche modak, a favourite during Ganesh Chaturthi, and Malvani Malpua, which Asif Jha, a vizier of the Mughal Empire, popularised in his later years during ramzan, was again to digest the fiery coastal food of Maharashtra.

## weather

INDIAN CITIES

INTERNATIONAL CITIES

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Rain: 0

Humidity: 79

Wind: normal

### Tomorrow's Forecast

Friday, Nov 21



Max 30°  
Min 24°  
Cloudy

Sunrise: 06:10

Sunset: 05:39

Barometer: 1015

Saturday, Nov 22

Max 31°  
Min 24°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday  
Nov 23



31° | 24°  
Cloudy

Monday  
Nov 24



33° | 26°  
Partly Cloudy

Tuesday  
Nov 25



32° | 26°  
Partly Cloudy

Wednesday  
Nov 26



33° | 27°  
Partly Cloudy

Thursday  
Nov 27

33° | 27°  
Partly Cloudy

## Low Vitamin D levels may lead to early death

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.

## 8 Indian spices that prevent cancer

*Not every battle is struck by a wave of violence and not every fight culminates in bloodshed.*

When the opposition in question is an adamant disease like cancer, our armoury should be packed with a lifestyle of regular health check-ups and a diet including foods that double as anti-cancer agents.

When actress Lisa Ray was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a relatively rare cancer of the bone marrow, all she said was, "I'll beat cancer". Carrying this spirit of defeating a disease often labelled 'incurable', we try to find out diet methods, especially in the selection of spices that can avert the multiplying of malignant cells in the body that gradually mature into insurmountable cancer cells.

Our grandmothers would in no time prepare us a glass of warm milk with saffron sprinkled on top when we went crying to her with bruise on our knee or wound on the elbow. The herbal turmeric paste soothed minor cuts and healed all skin rashes. These age-old kitchen tricks are little more than mere quick-fix tactics. Spices like turmeric and saffron are inherent with medicinal properties that, when incorporated to our diet from an early stage strengthens our bodies against invasion of toxins, bacteria and virus.

Senior consultant surgical oncologist Dr. B. Niranjan Naik and senior clinical nutritionist, Fortis La Femme, Shipra Saklani Mishra, inform us about the goodness of Indian spices with cancer-fighting properties and the necessity of their inclusion to our eating habits.

**Turmeric/Curcumin:** This is the king of spices when it comes to dealing with cancer diseases, besides it adding a zesty colour to our food on the platter. Turmeric contains the powerful polyphenol Curcumin that has been clinically proven to retard the growth of cancer cells causing prostate cancer, melanoma, breast cancer, brain tumour, pancreatic cancer and leukemia amongst a host of others. Curcumin promotes 'Apoptosis'- (programmed cell death/cell suicide) that safely eliminates cancer breeding cells without posing a threat to the development of other healthy cells. In cases of conventional radiotherapy and chemotherapy, the surrounding cells too become a target in addition to the cancer cells. Therefore, the side-effects are imminent.

**Fennel:** Armed with phyto-nutrients and antioxidants, cancer cells have nothing but to accept defeat when the spice is fennel. 'Anethole', a major constituent of fennel resists and restricts the adhesive and invasive activities of cancer cells. It suppresses the enzymatic regulated activities behind cancer cell multiplication. A tomato-fennel soup with garlic or fresh salads with fennel bulbs make for an ideal entree prior to an elaborate course meal. Roasted fennel with parmesan can be another star pick.

**Saffron:** A natural carotenoid dicarboxylic acid called 'Crocin' is the primary cancer-fighting element that saffron contains. It not only inhibits the progression of the disease but also decreases the size of the tumour by half, guaranteeing a complete goodbye to cancer. Though it is the most expensive spice in the world for it is derived from around 250,000 flower stigmas (saffron crocus) that make just about half a kilo, a few saffron threads come loaded with benefits you won't regret paying for. Saffron threads can be used in various ways:

**Cumin:** Yes, it aids digestion and probably that is why we like chewing a handful of cumin seeds at the end of every meal. However, its health benefits go beyond. A portent herb with anti-oxidant characteristics, cumin seeds contain a compound called 'Thymoquinone' that checks proliferation of cells responsible for prostate cancer. So, instead of loading your usual snack options with calories and oil, add this seasoning to your bread, fried beans or sauce and make the dish rich in flavour and high on health. You can rediscover the magic of cumin in your regular bowl of tadka dal and rice too!

**Cinnamon:** It takes not more than a half teaspoon of cinnamon powder every day to keep cancer risk away. A natural food preservative, cinnamon is a source of iron and calcium. Useful in reducing tumour growth, it blocks the formation of new vessels in the human body. Some of the effective ways of including cinnamon in your diet are:

-Start your day with a cup of cinnamon tea (in leaf or sachet)  
Make your breakfast meal a super healthy one; just add this wonder spice to your morning oatmeal and you are going well!

-A fruity delight comprising chopped apples, a few walnuts and your magic potion cinnamon

-Honey and cinnamon in your glass of milk before going to bed; no cancer nightmares assured!

**Oregano:** More than a pizza or pasta topping, oregano confirms its worth as a potential agent against prostate cancer. Consisting of anti-microbial compounds, just one teaspoon of oregano has the power of two cups of red grapes! Phyto-chemical 'Quercetin' present in oregano restricts growth of malignant cells in the body and acts like a drug against cancer-centric diseases.

**Cayenne Pepper/Capsaicin (Chilli peppers):** A promising spice with anti-cancer properties, an overdose of chilli peppers however should be restrained. Capsaicin induces the process of apoptosis that destroys potential cancer cells and reduces the size of leukemia tumour cells considerably. It can be concluded that apart from setting our tongues on fire, chilli peppers can scare cancer pathogens off too.

**Ginger:** This humble spice boasts of medicinal qualities that help lowering cholesterol, boost metabolism and kill cancer cells. Easily added to vegetable dishes, fish preparations and salads, ginger enhances the flavour in cooking. Chew on fresh parsley if the odour bothers you.

**Others:** Cloves, anise, basil, garlic, caraway, fenugreek, mustard, mint leaves, rosemary, Limonin (fresh lemon), virgin olive, vinegar and avocado are other cancer-fighting diet components.

Dr. K Medhi, Senior Consultant, Medical Oncology informs us on other diet habits that can keep cancer risk at bay:

1. A plant-based diet with a variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains and beans is the best organic way to fight cancer.
2. Add fibre: Replace white rice with brown rice in meals
3. Substitute whole-grain bread for white bread; choose a bran muffin over a pastry
4. Snack on popcorn instead of potato chips.
5. Eat fresh fruits with skin.

6. Omega-3 fatty acids fight inflammation.
7. Cook with olive oil instead of regular vegetable oil
8. Avoid packaged or fried foods that are high in trans-fats
9. Avoid processed salt. Celtic sea salt/Himalayan salt can be consumed sparingly.
10. Cancer patients: Do not load your diet with turmeric or Curcumin supplements without doctor's consult or prescribed dosage.

### **Cancer fighting salad recipe: Couscous salad with sun dried tomato**

#### **Ingredients:**

Couscous Wheat- 120 gms

Turmeric - 1 gm

Salt/pepper To Taste

Sun dried tomato- 2 nos

Olives (black/Green) - 2 nos each

Mint leaves- 2 sprig

Lemon juice

Ginger dices

Bell pepper dices- 15 gm

Olive oil- 2 Tsp

Saffron

Pickle onion- 2 nos

Lettuce leaves

### **Method:**

1. Take a pan and add salt, pepper, turmeric, couscous, olive oil and saffron. Steam the couscous for 5 minutes and chill immediately.
2. Now add lemon juice, bell pepper, olives, sun dried tomato, pickle onion (chopped) and dice ginger. Mix well and add mint. Mould it on top of lettuce leaves and serve chilled.

*(Recipe contributed by Chef Diwas Wadhera, Executive Chef at Mosaic Hotels, Noida)*

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### **Age gracefully with the help of the right food**

*You are what you eat' is an adage one should remember every time you are about to eat. Making antioxidants a part of your daily diet, eating more fibrous and colourful fruits are some of the tips that can help you age gracefully.*

**Include antioxidants in your diet:** When it comes to repairing damaged cells in your body, you need antioxidants. The damage that our skin suffers daily thanks to the relentless sun rays, the everpresent pollution can be repaired with antioxidants. They also reduce inflammation in the body and restore balance in the system. Tripti Gupta, lifestyle nutrition consultant says, "Green tea is rich

in EGCG(epigallocatechingallate), a popular antioxidant known for fighting cancer, cardiovascular conditions and much more." Antioxidants can help increase the elasticity of your skin.

**How to do it:** Eat berries like blueberries, strawberries, citrus fruits like oranges, mosambi and also leafy green vegetables. You could also have prescribed natural antioxidant supplement .

**Choose the right fatty acids**Maintain a balance between Omega 3 and Omega 6 Fatty Acids:

It is important to maintain a balance between the Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids for maintaining cellular health and for reduction of inflammation. Nutritionist and health consultant Karishma Chawla says, "Omega 3 rich foods are avocado, olive oil, salmon, tuna, walnuts, flaxseeds."

**How to do it:** You should reduce your intake of foods that are over processed and refined. Avoid tinned and canned food.

Avoid takeaways. Grilling or boil food at home instead.

Salmon, mackerel, sardines - eat these oily fish grilled or broiled.

Avoid cooking with butter and ghee. Opt for healthier oils.

**Eating at regular intervals and balancing sugar levels:**

If you keep hungry for longer intervals, excess insulin may be produced and that can lead to ageing and inflammation. Consulting nutritionist and clinical dietitian Pooja Makhija

says, "Eat small meals at two to three hour intervals."

**How to do it:** Your meals should comprise lean white meats, complex carbohydrates, and antioxidant rich vegetables.

If you are eating at two-hourly breaks your small meals in between the lunch and dinner should have good quality nutritive snacks like par boiled vegetable sticks with hummus etc.

Avoid having an excess of coffee and tea.

**Support immune function:** With age, the immune system of the body loses its efficiency and stops working like it would otherwise. When your immune system works well, then the body's natural defenses against all kinds of diseases and illnesses function to full capacity and you are safe from diseases. You need to boost your immunity.

**How to do it:** The best way to do it is to make sure that you get at least eight hours of sleep.

**Exercise every day:** If you thought you need to exercise only if you are fat, then you need to think again. Exercising regularly also increases your energy, boosts your immune system and increases bone density.

**How to do it:**

Walk for at least 40 minutes daily.

Use the staircase at every opportunity.

Practice yoga and pilates once or twice a week.

## A gram of turmeric daily could boost memory

*Adding only a gram of turmeric to one's breakfast could help improve the memory of people who are in the early stages of diabetes and at risk of developing cognitive impairment, a study indicates.*

For the study, professor Mark Wahlqvist from the Monash Asia Institute at the Melbourne-based Monash University tested the working memory of men and women, aged 60 or more, who had recently been diagnosed with untreated pre-diabetes in Taiwan.

Working memory is widely thought to be one of the most important mental faculties, critical for cognitive abilities such as planning, problem solving and reasoning.

In the placebo-controlled study, subjects were given one gram of turmeric with an otherwise nutritionally bland breakfast of white bread.

Their working memory was tested before and some hours after the meal.

"We found that this modest addition of turmeric to breakfast improved working memory over six hours in older people with pre-diabetes," professor Wahlqvist added.

Turmeric's characteristic yellow colour is due to curcumin which accounts for three to six percent of turmeric and has been shown by experimental studies to reduce the risk of dementia.

"Our findings with turmeric are consistent with earlier observations as they appear to influence cognitive function where there is disordered energy metabolism and insulin resistance," Wahlqvist said.

The study was published in the *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

# DECCAN Chronicle

Vizag to be a hub for commercial farming



Representative image

**Visakhapatnam:** Vizag will shortly become a hub for many rare crops in the region owing to its excellent fertility. The area is suitable for crops like apples, strawberry, grapes, pepper, basmati rice, organic coffee and many others. The average annual rainfall in this zone that includes parts of Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam districts is up to 200 cm.

The district has coast, plains and hilly areas of the Eastern Ghats flanking on the North and Western parts of the agency region with

an altitude of about 900 metres dotted by several peaks exceeding 1,200 metres. Sizeable areas in the division have black cotton soil and others are hill tracks with rich biodiversity.

The agriculture department and the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology recently planted some apple varieties in Chintapalli mandal on an experimental basis and they are growing well despite being hit by strong winds during Cyclone Hudhud. Officials have also sown basmati rice on a few acres.

"Last year, on an experimental basis we cultivated broccoli, red cabbage, lettuce, green pepper, and brussels sprouts. The quality was very good. Strawberry, grapes and basmati were also tried. Black pepper, coffee, and rajma are being extensively grown," said Dr C. Chandra Sekhar Rao, senior scientist, Horticulture Research Station, Chintapalli.

Strawberry, grapes and basmati have been tried out in the Vizag zone. These areas are also suitable for fruits like peach, Japanese plum, avocado, litchi, and cocoa.

Scientists have plans to introduce kiwi or Chinese gooseberry shortly. "We have tested environmental suitability for kiwi and it can be grown. We have recently planted some white grape plants in our research station for observing their growth. Some tribal farmers in the region have already witnessed good yield of grape, green apple that they have grown in their backyard," said Dr N. Venugo-pala Rao of Regional Agricultural Research Station, Chintapalli.

## THE HINDU BusinessLine

### Tea sector in South seeks Govt help to tide over crisis

Coimbatore, November 20: The tea industry in the South has sought immediate intervention of the Government to save it from the current crisis it is facing in view of low prices for the beverage. It has also asked for the immediate reconstitution of the Tea Board and appointment of a full-time Chairman for the Board.

“We faced a similar crisis in 2001, but the situation was not as alarming as it is now. There was a crisis in 1985 too,” said AK Mani, former Kerala MLA and member, Tea Board..

Today, plantations in Kerala are struggling to survive. The levy of Rs. 700 a hectare as plantation tax and land tax of Rs. 500, revision in lease rentals to Rs. 1,300 a hectare is posing a huge burden on the plantations,”.

Voicing concern over the steep decline in tea prices and mounting cost of production and inputs, the President of the United Planters’ Association of Southern India Vijayan Rajes said: “The sale price of tea has crashed from Rs. 145 a kg a year ago to Rs. 80 now, but the cost of production has risen to over Rs. 85 a kg. The sector is bleeding. Any further fall in the sale price would only result in closure of tea gardens, rendering millions jobless”.

The State should consider bringing down the value added tax for the estate sector from 5 per cent to one as is being levied on Bought Leaf Factories.

Huge amounts due to producers under various schemes are yet to be released. Unless necessary clearance is given for release of funds, it would be impossible to implement the schemes. And for this, the Government should consider constituting a Board and appointing a Chairman at the helm to address such issues.

The Upasi President has also appealed to the Government to consider concessional electricity tariff for the plantations by not linking it with other industries. “Notwithstanding such issues, buyers insist on various certification without offering any additional price.

## **Coconut oil continues to slip on slack demand**

**Kochi, November 20:** Coconut oil prices continue to decline further with prices dropping to Rs. 400 a quintal both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu this week. Prices are ruling at Rs. 14,400 in Kerala, while in Tamil Nadu it stood at Rs. 13,000.

Thalath Mahmood, Director, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), attributed it to the absence of local demand as well as the sluggishness in upcountry and corporate buying. With low arrivals, he said the declining trend is likely to continue in the

coming weeks. He also pointed out that corporates have managed to get ample stocks to meet their production requirements.

Copra prices too lost Rs. 200/quintal. The prices stood at Rs. 9,200 in Tamil Nadu whereas it was Rs.9,800 in Kerala.

**Our Erode Correspondent adds:** Coconut oil lost Rs. 10 a kg on Wednesday at Erode. “Till Monday, price of coconut oil was at Rs. 2,100 for 15 kg. Suddenly on Wednesday the price decreased to Rs.1,900-1,950. However, there were no buyers as they are expecting a further drop,” said RM Palanisamy, a trader.

Meanwhile, the copra price is also declining and on Wednesday it was sold at Rs. 9,750-10,150 a quintal and edible copra also decreased to Rs. 9,600.

## **Post-Hudhud, a bitter season awaits Anakapalle jaggery trade**

**Visakhapatnam, November 20:** The Anakapalle jaggery market in Visakhapatnam district, the largest in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, has taken a huge hit in the aftermath of Hudhud cyclone. Arrivals have not yet picked up even after nearly 40 days after the cyclone.

On Wednesday, 4,000 lumps (of 15-17 kg a piece) arrived to the yard at Anakapalle and the prices were in the range of Rs. 240-290 per 10 kg, according to trade sources.

Even now in many of the jaggery-producing villages power has not been restored to agricultural connections.

Farmers are preparing jaggery by running the cane crushers and jaggery pans on diesel. It is adding to the cost of production and the production has suffered as a result.

Usually, the Anakapalle market receives on an aggregate four million lumps (of 15-17 kg a piece) in a season and the arrivals begin in October-November, but gather momentum only after December. They continue up to April-May and then the slack season begins.

“This year, because of the cyclone the arrivals have suffered badly in October-November, and only this week the inflow has touched the 4,000-lumps-a-day mark. This trend will continue for atleast a fortnight as power has not yet been restored to agricultural

connections. Only in December arrivals may improve,” says K Butchi Raju, a noted trader.

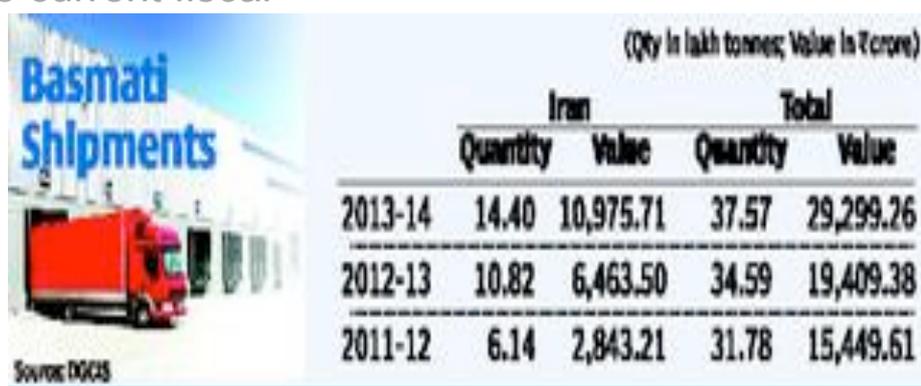
According to farmers, there may be a shortfall of 8-10 lakh lumps this season due to the cyclone. “The trade feels there will be a substantial reduction, but we cannot hazard a more accurate guess, as there is no accurate estimate of crop damage yet. However, there has been substantial damage,” Butchi Raju said.

Anakapalle MLA PS Govind said he had impressed upon the Tranco officials the need to restore power as early as possible to the farm connections in the area, but “it may take some more time, at least 20 days or so.” He said he had pleaded with the Government to provide diesel on subsidy to farmers till then, as the cost of production of jaggery was going up.

There are three co-operative sugar factories in Visakhapatnam district - one at Tummapala, the second at Chodavaram and the third at Yetikoppaka. The jaggery production also depends on the functioning of the factories. The Tummapala factory is always in a crisis and, if it does not crush sugar this season, the arrivals may improve at the jaggery market.

## Iran’s ban on basmati imports to hit exporters

Shipments to the country down by three lakh tonnes so far in the current fiscal



	Iran		Total	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
2013-14	14.40	10,975.71	37.57	29,299.26
2012-13	10.82	6,463.50	34.59	19,409.38
2011-12	6.14	2,843.21	31.78	15,449.61

(Qty in lakh tonnes; Value in ₹ crore)

Source: DGCI

Chennai/Bangalore, November 20: Indian rice exporters will be badly hit by a general ban on imports of rice imposed by Iran recently. The ban will further depress prices of basmati rice in the domestic market.

Iran has barred rice from other countries as its local crop is reported to be good this year. Tehran has imported over 1.25 million tonnes (mt) of rice this year during April-July against 1.45 mt in the same period a year ago. Iran bought over 2.5 million tonnes of basmati rice from India in the last two years.

“We feel the ban is temporary, but it will hit exporters. Prices will also come under pressure,” said MP Jindal, President of the All India Rice Exporters Association.

Jindal, who is Chairman of Best Foods International, a major exporter to Iran, said officials of the industry body are meeting the Commerce Secretary on Friday to take up the issue at government-level with Iran.

According to Agricultural and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority (Apeda), basmati exports to Iran during April-July were valued at Rs. 1,732 crore against Rs. 1,810 crore a year ago.

AK Gupta, Advisor to Apeda, said, “though the ban seems temporary, it may lead to loss of our market, which we may or may not regain”. Gupta said the exports to Iran were lower by about three lakh tonnes in the current fiscal so far. Overall, basmati exports this fiscal may end lower by 5-7 per cent at around 3.5 million tonnes, Gupta added.

The consensus among Indian exporters is that Iran may re-open its markets by end-January or early February.

### **Prices plunge**

Currently, the basmati paddy is ruling at around Rs. 2,960 a quintal, far lower than the Rs. 5,360 it fetched during the same time a year ago, in Punjab and Haryana.

The market seems to have factored in the Iranian ban as rumours have been floating around over past three weeks, an exporter said. Basmati prices are down by about 30 per cent over last year, also influenced by a higher crop in India.

“Our production is higher by about 30-35 per cent higher than last year with output being higher in the non-traditional States such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and eastern UP,” said Anil Mittal, Chairman of KRBL, the largest producer and exporter of basmati rice.

While KRBL’s exposure to Iran has been minimal at around 15,000 tonnes annually, Mittal said the demand from Europe was on the rise. Earlier this year, Iran cut imports of Indian basmati rice after it imposed new standards on chemical contamination. Dissatisfaction over the quality of rice being delivered by Indian exporters also led to a fall in shipments.

### **India-Iran pact**

India and Iran created a barter system two years ago to overcome Western sanctions following a dispute with Tehran over its nuclear programme. In exchange for Iranian oil, India offers Tehran rice, soyameal and pharmaceuticals. Under the trade arrangement, India pays for part of the crude oil it receives from Iran in rupees. The funds are then deposited at the Public sector UCO Bank and used to pay exporters for shipment of food and other products to Iran.

“Exporters will take a hit since prices are bound to fall in view of the ban. They deserve it since they have been ignoring other markets at the cost of focusing on Iran,” said an official of a rice exporting firm not wishing to identify himself. India is already paying dearly for focusing on only Iran to export soyameal. In September, soyameal exports plunged to lower than 1,000 tonnes in view of Iran cutting its imports.

As a result of focusing on Iran, Indian exporters had neglected or ignored other markets such as Japan and Korea.