

# THE HINDU

## Conference

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will conduct a one-day national conference on 'Green Fuels from Biomass: Bio-refinery Approach' on November 8.

A release said that the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy-supported conference would see participation from various Government agencies, manufacturers of renewable energy gadgets, experts and faculty from the university. The release added that farmers, industrialists, entrepreneurs, scientists and others were welcome to participate. For details, contact 0422-6611276.

## From TNAU to UP to help farmers

Farms in Uttar Pradesh will soon see pest traps that were developed in rooms in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University here. According a press release and S. Mohan, Dean, School of Post Graduate Studies, transfer of traps from the University to the State happened after scientist Baya S. Srivastava from Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh, got in touch with the professors here for use by paddy and pulses farmers there. The University had sent 50 traps.

The Uttar Pradesh scientist got to know of the University developing the traps when he was here in November – December 2013 to undergo training in 'recent advances in stored product insect pest management', which the Indian Council for Agriculture Research had organised.

Mr. Mohan said that the University's Department of Entomology had over the years developed TNAU probe trap, pitfall trap, pulse beetle trap, automatic insect removal bin, indicator device, UV light trap, stack probe trap, and TNAU insect egg remover for use by farmers.

Of those, the University had obtained patent for the TNAU insect egg remover and was in the process of obtaining one for stack probe trap. The

annual loss of grains to pests in India was around Rs. 1,300 crore, Mr. Mohan added.

### **Crop loans**

Crop loans to the tune of Rs. 69.38 lakh were distributed to 183 farmers of Ariyalur district on Friday.

A.Saravanelraj, District Collector, distributed the loans to the farmers. The loans were distributed by 16 Primary Agriculture Co-operative Credit Societies.

A crop loan target of Rs. 90 crore has been set for the year 2014-15.

### **Crop damage to be assessed in Nagapattinam**



The Agriculture Department has begun an enumeration to assess the extent of crop damage caused by heavy rain over the past 10 days in Nagapattinam district.

The move comes in the wake of extensive inundation of paddy fields across the district. Even though the rain has subsided since Thursday evening, farmers have expressed apprehensions over possible damages to the crop unless the water drained in the next three to four days. With the Met Office predicting more rainfall for the State, farmers are keeping their fingers crossed.

Farmers blamed the Public Works Department, alleging that the failure to dredge irrigation and drainage canals has landed them in the present predicament. "First there was a delay in getting water in the irrigation canals even two months after the release of water from Mettur Reservoir.

Most of the direct sown crops, just about 10 to 15 days old, have submerged. If we had got water in time, the crop would have been much older and stood a better chance of survival. As the drainage canals have not been dredged, the water is not draining quickly,” said S.V.G.Giridharan, deputy secretary, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam affiliated to the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Arupathi Kalyanam, general secretary of Federation of Farmers Associations in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts, said nearly 50 per cent of the cultivated area has been inundated in Nagapattinam district. Each village has its own low-lying area and the inundated crop could be damaged if the water does not drain within the next three or four days, he said.

He too blamed the failure to dredge drainages for the present situation. Revenue officials should clear the encroachments on the drainages, which should be cleared on a war footing, he demanded.

Agriculture Department officials conceded that the process of draining water was slow at some places. N.Paneerselvam, Joint Director of Agriculture, Nagapattinam told *The Hindu* that direct sown paddy crop in about 8,070 hectares, transplanted crop in 13,139 hectares, and thaladi crop in 5,282 hectares have been inundated in the district. While the transplanted crop was at various stages ranging from 15 to 30 days, the direct sown crops were very young. Places such as Mayiladuthurai, Kollidam, Sirkazhi and Sembanarkovil were among the worst affected.

“Our field staff will take up an assessment of the extent of the crop damage village wise as and when the water drains,” Mr.Paneersevlam said. According to him, samba paddy has been raised in about 87,190 hectares and thaladi in 18,792 hectares in the district so far.

However, Kaveri Dhanapalan, general secretary, Cauvery Farmers Protection Association, estimated that at least 39,000 hectares of direct sown crop, just 15 days old, have been inundated. Even if the crop survives, its growth will be stunted and prone for pest and disease attacks.

Meanwhile, Collector T. Munusamy, in a press release, said steps have been taken to ensure free flow of water in all drainage channels and rivers in the district.

Field staff and officials were engaged in the exercise, he said.

Mr. Munusamy visited the New Nambiar Nagar where tsunami habitations have been inundated with rain water. He directed the officials to remove blockages on the Devanadhi to drain the water.

Vedaranyam registered the maximum rainfall of 54 mm during the 24-hour period ending at 8.30 a.m. on Friday.

The following were the chief amount of rainfall in other parts of the district during the same period (in mm): Kollidam 35.5; Manalmedu 23.2; Mayiladuthurai 16; Sirkazhi 15.8; Tranquebar 11; Thalaignayiru and Nagapattinam 5.8 each; and Thirupoondi 2.

### **Farmers demand insurance for crop damage**



Complaints of delay and denial of insurance for crop damage from farmers flooded the monthly grievance redressal meet here on Friday.

Several farmers complained that compensation for crop damage was denied to them.

They alleged that bankers advised them to take back the premium amount, and questioned why there was so much delay in disbursing compensation.

Collector N. Venkatachalam explained that bankers might have failed to remit the premium to insurance companies in time. If that was the case, bankers should pay the compensation.

He also advised the Lead Bank Manager to write to the circle office in this connection.

A farmer said a nationalised bank refused to sanction agriculture loan even after production of all necessary documents and a guarantor.

The concerned bank manager pressed him to motivate his uncle to pay his loan dues.

The manager undertook to release the loan if the guarantor paid his dues.

When the Collector wanted to know the reason, the bank staff replied that the guarantor was a defaulter. But the farmer claimed that his guarantor had settled all loans promptly.

Moreover, the applicant did not avail himself of loan from any bank so far and the present loan amount was only around Rs.1 lakh.

When farmers from Oddanchatram appealed to officials to remove acacia trees in waterbodies, the Collector said forest officials were sitting on the file seeking permission to remove the trees.

Over two lakh acacia plants had to be removed from waterbodies.

Storage level in several tanks had depleted owing to growth of such plants, he also said.

The Collector advised local bodies to remove acacia trees from waterbodies in their panchayats to improve storage.

Even though all dams had comfortable storage, rainfall was poor in Reddiyarchatram, Sanarpatti and Natham and tanks were dry in these areas.

Water did not reach Pulvettikulam so far, said PWD officials.

## Credit limit of farmers goes up

Recent upward revision of scale of finance for major crops grown in Tirupur district as well as fresh fixation of unit costs for allied activities like dairy, poultry development, and pig rearing is becoming handy for farmers who are dependent on institutional credit.

The scale of finance for crops was revised by the District Level Technical Committee comprising officials from departments of agriculture, horticulture and cooperation, representatives of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, and Lead Bank, and representatives of farmers, after taking into consideration the rise in input and labour costs.

The new indicative unit costs for major activities like minor irrigation, farm mechanisation, dairy and poultry developments, were arrived at by the Nabard.

“The objective of calibrating the scale of finance and the fixation of unit costs is to help the banks to arrive at the tentative costs of investment to be financed by them. Publishing of these data gives the farmers too an understanding of the basic rates of finance for respective agriculture and related activities,” said Lead District Manager V. Ganesan.

Banking sources added that the scales of finance was meant for one operating cycle. The new rates would be applicable till the end of the current financial year.

Following the revision exercise, the scale of finance for hybrid variety of paddy, one of the most important crops, had been fixed at Rs. 22,300 an acre (old rate Rs. 20,500 an acre).

Similarly, finance scale for sugar cane, another important crop, and maize, a crop grown widely in Tirupur district, had been increased substantially.

New scale of finance for some of the important crops for an acre were: maize (irrigated) — Rs. 16,520; groundnut (irrigated) — Rs. 17,700, grapes — Rs. 29,700, tomato (hybrid) — Rs. 26,800, turmeric — Rs. 49,500, ordinary onion — Rs. 24,950, and Bellary onion — Rs. 18,580.

In the case of animal husbandry activities, the indicative costs were fixed for unit sizes of dairy and goat/sheep and pig farm.

Some farmers said that the enhanced scale of finance would help them to meet the increasing labour charges but should have hiked a bit more considering the steep escalation in overall expenditure.

### **Farmers asked not to sell produce at APMCs**

The government's apathy towards the problems of onion, maize and cotton farmers has forced the leaders of the farming community to ask farmers not to sell their agricultural produce at the APMC (Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees).

### **Protest**

Addressing presspersons here on Friday, State general secretary of Raitha Sena Karnataka Sangha Shankrappa Ambali and Bahujan Samaj Party leader Laxman Bakkai, said that although farmers had been staging a day and night protest in front of the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Dharwad since the last four days, neither the government representatives nor the MLAs were concerned about the farmers' plight.

Mr. Ambali said as the elected representatives and the government representatives were least bothered about the farmers, the only way to teach them a lesson was to stop taking their agricultural produce to the APMC yards.

"The government will wake up only when the APMCs come to a grinding halt," he said.

He said that because of excess rains, standing crops in several districts had been damaged and to add to their woes the prices of cotton, maize and onion had suddenly dropped. "Although we are staging a protest in Dharwad since last four days seeking announcement of Minimum Support Price (MSP) for these crops, nobody has met the agitating farmers," he said.



Mr. Laxman Bakkai said while the State government had announced MSP for paddy and arecanut, it had not bothered to look at the plight of the farmers of onion, maize and cotton, who predominantly belong to the northern districts of Karnataka.

### Help for ryots to buy milch cattle



In order to encourage farmers to take up the establishment and management of dairy units and thereby offset the difficulties of drought, the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (Nabard), in association with Karimnagar Milk Producer Company Limited and Deccan Gramina Bank, has launched integrated dairy units in the watershed areas of the district.

In the first phase of the programme, the authorities selected 120 beneficiaries falling under the six watersheds in Konaraopeta, Koheda, Sircilla, Vemulawada, Kodimial mandals. As part of the tripartite agreement, Nabard will extend financial assistance of Rs.50,000 to each beneficiary for the purchase of a pair of milch animals. A subsidy of 25 per cent would be contributed by the Indo-German watershed development programme.

Nabard would assist the beneficiaries in the purchase of suitable milch cattle.



## Total organic farming in State soon: Minister

Having declared Kasaragod as the first organic district in the State, Agriculture Minister K. P. Mohanan himself set a role model by taking part in the organic paddy cultivation at Kuthirapadi in Madhur panchayat near here on Friday.

The Minister in the accompaniment of traditional song associated with paddy cultivation, ventured out in the marshy field and took part in the cultivation process by rendering the traditional song. Along with other farmers, he inaugurated the cultivation process in a 10-acre land in the locality.

The cultivation was part of imparting practical know-how on comprehensive organic paddy farming initiated jointly by Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) plus farmers' field school, College of Agriculture, Padannakkad and the Krishi Bhavan at Madhur.

The organic cultivation from nursery to harvesting would be completed in six phases.

Addressing the function, Mr. Mohanan said the government was planning to turn Kerala as a total organic farming State in a span of two years as efforts are under way to promote organic farming in select assembly constituencies.

As part of the programme, first three panchayats that register outstanding achievements in organic farming would be rewarded prize money of Rs. 3 lakh, Rs 2 lakh and Rs. one lakh each.

The assembly segments that succeed in promoting organic farming would be rewarded Rs. 10 lakh, Rs. 5 lakh and Rs. 3 lakh for the first three places.

The inaugural function was also attended by N. A. Nellikkunnu, MLA.

Others who attended included leading farmers from the district, Principal Agriculture Officer Chandran Korambath, ATMA project director K.

Shivarama Krishnan, Kasaragod Block Panchayat president Mumtaz Shukoor, local representatives and others.

### **Farmers told to be wary of pest controllers**

A retired Forest Department officer, who is also an agriculturist, has cautioned fellow farmers not to fall prey to people claiming to be pest controllers.

R.L. Dias, a retired range forest officer and resident of Parkala in Udupi district, has a coconut farm with 118 trees. Recently, a few people approached him claiming to be from the Agriculture Department and offered to administer pest control to his trees.

In a statement released here, Mr. Dias said he believed in their words and permitted them to do the work, at Rs. 50 per tree. When he went to check the work being done, Mr. Dias grew suspicious with their behaviour and on inquiry, they revealed they were from some nursery.

Immediately, Mr. Dias asked the strangers to stop the work, by which time they had already administered pest control powders to about 75 trees. The strangers gave a bill for Rs. 3 lakh and asked him immediately to pay the same.

The strangers put pressure on Mr. Dias to settle the bill immediately; he somehow managed to borrow time and approached the Manipal police with a complaint. Mr. Dias later came to know that his neighbour too was charged Rs. 8,000 in a similar modus operandi for administering pest control powder for six trees.

Mr. Dias urged agriculturists to check the background of strangers before allowing them to enter their farms.

He may be contacted over phone on 0820 2544327 or 9449328168.

### **Varsity to research on infections in arecanut**



The University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences (UAHS), Shimoga, will take up a research project on managing pest and fungal infections in arecanut.

C. Vasudevappa, Vice-Chancellor of UAHS, Shimoga, said the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) will provide Rs. 5 crore for the project.

The Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), Kasaragod, and National Bureau of Agriculturally Important Insects (NBAII), Bangalore, will join hands with the UAHS.

The Agricultural and Horticultural Research Station (AHRs) of UAHS in Sringeri has hosted various research works related to arecanut. The infrastructure necessary for the ICAR-funded research project will be created at AHRs.

Mr. Vasudevappa said the CPCRI and NBAII will depute two scientists each for the research project. The project will be of three years duration and will be a target-oriented research work. The UAHS will also create the posts of four research associates, who will work for a monthly honorarium. The research work is likely to commence from April 2015, he said.

There has been a sharp decline in arecanut yield in Malnad region in recent times owing to fruit rot disease, root grub disease and yellow leaf

disease. The results from the existing pest management practices are not on expected levels. Owing to heavy rain that lashed Malnad region last year, there was excess moisture content in the weather resulting in breakout of fruit rot disease.

In wake of these problems, the UAHS has planned to take up research project to evolve effective means of managing pest and fungal infections.

### **Solar scheme: aggrieved farmer files complaint with Governor Vajubhai Vala, Centre**



The controversy over Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Ltd. (KREDL) receiving 295 online applications from farmers within a record time of 7.25 minutes for setting up mini-solar power plants has taken a curious turn with an aggrieved farmer filing complaints in this regard before Governor Vajubhai Vala and the Secretary to the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

Farmer D.M. Ramanjanappa, who wanted to set up a solar power plant in Sira taluk but could not do so as the applications were closed even before he got access to the website, has appealed to the Governor and the Union Ministry to not only cancel applications received on October 9, but also conduct an inquiry to find out if the process was authentic and transparent. The complainant suspects that “those close to the power centres managed to submit their applications”.

## **Government offer**

The State government had decided to allow farmers to set up mini-solar power plants with a capacity of 1 to 3 MW on their farmland with an assurance that Escoms would buy power from them at Rs. 8.40 a unit. Following this, the KREDL called for online applications from farmers at 11 a.m. on October 9 with a condition that the applications would be accepted on a first come, first served basis. Against the total offer of 300 MW, KREDL had announced that it would receive applications to the level of 600 MW to make up for those opting out in the middle.

But farmers who sat before the computers along with experts to apply for the scheme were in for a shock as even before they could open the website or enter the details, the process of receiving applications got completed with the KREDL getting 295 applications, totalling up to 600 MW, within 7.25 minutes.

In his complaint, Mr. Ramanjanappa has referred to a report in *The Hindu* stating that 16 applications were received within the first minute and 50 were received in the first 1.20 minutes though farmers were of the opinion that it would take a minimum of two minutes to fill the online application that had 10 fields.

### **'Equal opportunity denied'**

He maintained that it was not possible to complete the application process before two minutes and alleged that the principle of natural justice had not been followed while receiving applications as equal opportunity was denied to him and thousands of other farmers.

## **Huge arrivals see fall in jasmine prices**

Prices of flowers at the wholesale market on Sattara Street in Srirangam have registered a sharp fall over the past two days following huge arrivals due to higher yield.

Farmers and traders say that the yield of flowers particularly jasmine has registered a sharp rise following the showers in the last few days.

The wholesale market on the Sattara street has been supplying flowers to small and medium traders all over the district besides catering to the needs of traders in adjoining districts including Perambalur, Ariyalur, Thanjavur and parts of Salem.

The price per kg of jasmine which stood at Rs.125-Rs.130 last week came down to a meagre Rs.20 on Thursday. “Even for this price, there was not much takers. The trade normally witnesses a serious dip in the prices after a few days during the post-Deepavali festival,” says Vanchinathan, one of the traders. He points out that small and medium traders will not turn up during the post-Deepavali festival, thereby bringing down the prices. However, he hoped, that prices would stabilise in a few days, particularly during the ‘Karthigai’ festival in a few weeks.

S.B. Satkthipriyan, another whole sale dealer, points out that the arrivals of flowers had stabilised over the last few weeks.

On Thursday, the arrivals stood at 500 kg but due to the absence of the small traders, he could not market the flowers immediately.

He got flowers from a cluster of villages such as Puliur, Ettarai, Posampatti, Koppu, Koundampatti and Neithalur Colony.

The recent showers had contributed to a great extent in enhancing the quality of jasmine flowers, traders pointed out.

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Farmers blamed the Public Works Department, alleging that the failure to dredge irrigation and drainage canals has landed them in the present predicament. "First there was a delay in getting water in the irrigation canals even two months after the release of water from Mettur Reservoir. Most of the direct sown crops, just about 10 to 15 days old, have submerged. If we had got water in time, the crop would have been much older and stood a better chance of survival. As the drainage canals have not been dredged, the water is not draining quickly," said S.V.G.Giridharan, deputy secretary, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam affiliated to the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

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Mr. Laxman Bakkai said while the State government had announced MSP for paddy and arecanut, it had not bothered to look at the plight of the farmers of onion, maize and cotton, who predominantly belong to the northern districts of Karnataka.

### **Telangana announces many sops for farmers**

The Telangana Council of Ministers has taken several farmer-friendly decisions at its meeting on Friday, including large-scale promotion of micro irrigation and poly-house cultivation and enhancement of milk procurement price.

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao said after the Cabinet meeting that his government had sanctioned Rs. 300 crore for promotion of micro irrigation, keeping in view the conditions in the State. Under the new

scheme, farmers belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes would get 100 per cent subsidy on the drip and sprinkler implements.

Small and marginal farmers would be given 90 per cent subsidy and other farmers would get 80 per cent subsidy for cultivating their lands with the help of micro irrigation. Alleging that the combined Andhra Pradesh Government had neglected poly-house/greenhouse cultivation in Telangana, the Chief Minister said their government would encourage it widely now as the lands here were most suitable for it.

Stating that the government had sanctioned Rs. 252 crore for the scheme, Mr. Chandrasekhar Rao noted that the previous government had fixed the maximum limit at 1,000 square meters for getting subsidy. However, they had decided to provide 70 per cent subsidy up to 3 acres per farmer for cultivating vegetables. In the first year, it would be sanctioned for 1,000 acres around Hyderabad for improving vegetable supplies to the State capital, he said.

Besides, the government had sanctioned Rs. 200 crore for farm mechanisation, under which the farmers would get 50 per cent subsidy for procuring implements.

Announcing another sop, this one to dairy farmers, the Chief Minister said the government would give Rs. 4 per litre incentive to milk producers of Vijaya Dairy.

Turning to power issue, the Chief Minister said Telangana had an investment of about Rs. 1,050 crore in Krishnapatnam thermal power project and the State had every right to get its share of power generated there. The plant was already generating 22 MW to 280 MW infirm power every day but the details were not being uploaded into the database of Southern Region Load Dispatch Centre, which would schedule power supply.

He accused his AP counterpart N. Chandrababu Naidu of wilfully delaying the commissioning of Krishnapatnam project with a vicious aim of putting farmers of Telangana to suffering. Telangana was supposed to get 1,422 MW together from Krishnapatnam and Hinduja's projects, he noted.

Mr. Chandrasekhar Rao requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to come to the rescue of Telangana on several issues, including power generation and sharing by Andhra Pradesh as it was the Centre's legitimate duty to implement the AP Reorganisation Act. He also listed out plans for generation of 14,000 MW in thermal and solar sectors over the next three years and plans for a 6,000 MW atomic power plant in Telangana.

# THE HINDU BusinessLine

## Bumper crop from a toll-free call



Shantaram, a farmer in Jalgaon village of Wardha district, Maharashtra, was all set to spray his cotton crop with fertiliser on August 20 when a message on his mobile informed him that it would rain soon. He immediately postponed the spraying.

“Otherwise I would have suffered a huge loss of money, labour, time and effort,” he explains.

Again, it was a timely SMS that saved the day for Suparn Semval, a farmer with marginal holding in Guptkashi village of Rudraprayag district,

Uttarakhand. His paddy crop worth thousands of rupees was saved from disease after he used the remedial spray the message suggested.

Nearly 70 lakh farmers across the country, including many in Jammu and Kashmir and the North East states, are registered with the year-old Kisan SMS Portal launched by the Union Agriculture Ministry and other stakeholders.

The SMSes arrive in each farmer's preferred language and contain information related to agriculture, fisheries, horticulture, animal husbandry or market prices.

The free service has sent out 176 crore messages to its registered users within a year. The portal has 4,000 registered experts sending out the advisories. Farmers can also call a toll-free number to get instant information in their local language from the Kisan Call Centre.

Last year the centre received 45 lakh calls, and the figure is expected to touch 10 million this fiscal. Farmers with an internet connection can log on to the Kisan Portal, which offers close to 20 web-based services including a buyer-seller interface.

In 2009-10, the India Meteorological Department began disseminating agro-met advisories through an SMS service run by private players such as IFFCO Kisan Sanchar Ltd (IKSL) and Reuters Market Light.

Seven years ago, IKSL had, in a joint venture with Airtel, launched a voice message service for farmers that has 12 lakh subscribers today. Each day, four voice messages and one text message are sent free of charge to farmers subscribing to the Green Sim card across 19 states, says GC Shrotriya, Head (Value Added Service) of IKSL.

Health- and livelihood-related messages are also sent. The other features include a dedicated helpline, phone-in programme with experts, playback facility and success stories of progressive farmers told in their own voice to motivate other farmers.

A special initiative to cover one lakh fishermen in Odisha was initiated in January, under an MOU with the government, to provide ocean-related alerts and information on fishing zones, prices and so on.

IKSL recently signed an MOU with the National Innovation Foundation of India (NIF) to disseminate information on innovations relevant to rural India.

A quiz programme based on voice messages sent over a period of time was added a few years ago and winners get free talk time worth Rs. 50-150. Anamika from Tajpur village in Uttar Pradesh won twice and bagged talk time of Rs. 130. She says that an infectious disease affecting cows in her village had been controlled through medicine prescribed over the voice message service.

Reuters Market Light says 13 lakh farmers in 50,000 villages across 17 states use its low-cost SMS service in nine languages.

According to a 2010 study by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) covering farmers in 12 states and one union territory, the economic benefit from agro-met services ranges from Rs.50,000 crore (where 24 per cent of farmers receive weather information) to Rs. 2.11 lakh crore (where all farmers receive weather information).

Sarita Brara is a freelance journalist based in New Delhi

### **Cashew exports continue to slip; imports rise**

Raw cashew nuts imports have increased significantly even as exports of cashew kernels continue to drop in the current financial year.

A strong domestic demand for cashew kernels due to significant rise in consumption without corresponding growth in raw cashew nut production in the country is cited as the reason for the rise in imports.

At the same time, raw cashew nuts are also shipped out of the country, of late, to Vietnam, market sources said.



They said Indian cashew processors having processing facilities abroad might be shipping out from the imported raw nut stocks to their units in Vietnam.

Imports of raw nuts during April-September were 6,86,765 tonnes valued at Rs. 4,547.74 crore. The unit value of the import was Rs. 66.22 a kg. As against this, imports in the corresponding period last fiscal were at 5,61,971 tonnes valued at Rs. 3,051.72 crore at the unit value of Rs. 54.30 a kg.

Whereas, the country has exported 1,999 tonnes of raw cashew nuts valued at Rs. 16.39 crore at the unit value of Rs. 81.99 a kg, according to Cashew Export Promotion Council sources.

Imports of raw nuts during April-March 2013-14 totalled 7,58,111 tonnes valued at Rs. 4,457.72 crore. While it stood at 8,92,365 tonnes valued at Rs. 5,331.74 crore in the same period the previous financial year, he said.

The exports during April-September 2014-15 dropped to 55,471 tonnes valued at Rs. 2,445.42 crore at an average unit value of Rs. 440.85 a kg from 61,866 tonnes valued at Rs. 2,520.02 crore at the unit value of Rs.407.34 a kg in the same period the previous fiscal, Sasi Varma, Executive Director and Secretary, Cashew Export Promotion Council of India (CEPCI) told *BusinessLine* .

## High prices

“High raw nut prices resulted in high kernel costs which makes it difficult to sell in overseas markets. Consequently, more quantities are sold to the domestic market,” he said.

He said an increase in demand is generally noticed during the winter months .

The total shipments during April 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014 increased by over 13 per cent to 1,13,620 tonnes from 1,00,105 tonnes in the

corresponding period the previous fiscal. Total value realisation stood at Rs. 4,975.96 crore, he said.

India has a huge domestic market for cashew kernels, trade sources said.

### **Domestic demand**

Domestic markets can absorb some 2.5 to 3 lakh tonnes of cashew kernels of various grades, KA Rethesh, Managing Director, Kerala State-owned Cashew Development Corporation (CDC), told *BusinessLine*.

He said exports are around 1.25 lakh tonnes from the organised sector, which sells an equal quantity in the domestic market.

At the same time, 1.25-1.50 lakh tonnes of cashew kernels are marketed by the unorganised sector. The peak demand season has started and it has already reflected on prices, which have gone up by 25 per cent, he said.

Prices of wholes, currently, range between Rs. 800 and Rs. 1,000 a kg and even at this rate there is a strong demand. In the international market, the average price is below Rs. 450 a kg.

### **Demand concerns put pressure on base metals**

The global base metals market is currently facing strong headwinds that impact price performance.

In 2012 and 2013, a combination of expanding liquidity, weakening dollar, China's voracious appetite for consumption and slowly improving growth prospects helped a strong uptick in demand. Although selective, investor interest in base metals was healthy.

Things are different now. This year has not been a great one for metals market.

In recent months, some of the important drivers have reversed direction while new challenges have emerged. Shrinking liquidity following the US Fed's tapering programme, a steadily firming dollar, slowing industrial

production in some of the major economies and lower inflation expectations have combined to cap the upside and force market prices down.

Currently, macroeconomic risks are casting a shadow – concerns over growth being the most important.

There is apprehension of demand slowdown. As the mover and shaker of the world commodity market, China's import and consumption of metals exert a profound impact.

With construction activity in the Asian major slowing, there are fresh concerns over metals' demand growth.

Another reason is the high level of corporate debt in China.

Although inflation is under control and employment healthy, the Chinese government seems to be worried about corporate debt and has, therefore, asked State-owned enterprises to fund purchases through cash flow rather than on credit.

According to experts, the metals and mining sector in China is not in a good shape. Declining investment growth and falling property prices have generated fears that the 2015 GDP growth target may be lowered. There are demand concerns in other regions too. Although US recovery is back on track, global growth is still uneven. Demand in Europe and Japan is still fragile.

Of course, many emerging markets show signs of stabilising with activities being adjusted to global realities. The US Fed's monetary policy normalisation is seen as another uncertainty as expectations differ about the timeframe. Geopolitical tensions may have somewhat receded, but the Russia-Ukraine stand-off and insurgency in Syria and Iraq can potentially create a turmoil.

Simply put, the global environment is full of strong pulls and pressures.

As a result, many commodities are trading close to their cost curve.

Some of the less-efficient producers have shut down. It has also prompted a cut in capacity expansion.

Collapsing metal prices deter fresh investment while investor risk appetite wanes.

Supply demand fundamentals have begun to assert themselves.

## **Exception**

An exception to the general trend of falling base metals prices is nickel whose price surge has been triggered by Indonesian ban on export of unprocessed raw material. Zinc is another exception because of tightening supplies.

Despite all the uncertainties surrounding the base metals market, on current reckoning, nickel will turn out to be a winner next year followed at a distance by zinc.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated October 25, 2014)

## **Few takers at Kochi tea sale**

Orthodox dust varieties in Kochi Tea auction witnessed heavy withdrawals due to lack of bids.

Though arrivals were up 17,000 kg compared with last week, demand was low. A small quantity sold was absorbed by exporters.

Despite good arrivals, prices declined for almost all varieties in sale no. 43. The quantity on offer in CTC grades was 12,45,500 kg, up from the last week's level.

The market opened Rs. 3-5 lower. The drop in prices was Rs. 5- Rs. 10 and sometimes more as the sale progressed. It even witnessed heavy withdrawals, the auctioneers Forbes, Ewart & Figgis said. In best Cochin

CTC dust quotation, good varieties fetched Rs. 90-137, medium grades quoted Rs. 70-90 and plain category stood at Rs. 55-65.

Arrival was good in leaf category and the quantity on offer in Orthodox grades was 1,88,000 kg. The quantity on offer in CTC leaf was 78,000 kg and the market was irregular and lower by Rs. 2- Rs. 3.

### **Dust category**

In dust category, Manjolai SFD quoted the best prices of Rs. 140 followed by Monica SFD at Rs. 137. In leaf grades, Chamraj Green Tea FOP (Sup) fetched the best prices of Rs. 341 followed by Pascoes Hyson Green Tea at Rs. 286.

### **Coffee exporters unfazed by weaker Euro Zone**

Coffee exporters are unperturbed over the weak economic conditions in the Eurozone, mainly in Germany – one of their biggest market.

Exporters feel that the current economic condition is unlikely to hurt shipments to Western Europe and are looking forward to the new crop arrivals to meet their commitments.

### **Transition**

“It (the economic condition) may see consumers moving from top quality to medium or low-end coffees, but, it may not have any impact on our shipments,” said Ramesh Rajah, President, Coffee Exporters Association.

The European markets led by Italy, Germany and Belgium are among the top five destinations for Indian coffee and accounted for over 41 per cent of exports in 2013-14.

Germany bought over a tenth of Indian coffees exported in the last financial year.

Rajah said exports this year are flat; in fact, a bit lower than last year's. However, shipments are expected to pick up with the arrivals of the new crop sometime in the second half of December.

"Overseas demand is there but offerings are low, may be due to the end-of-season factor. Coffee from the old season is still available, but at a higher price. Because of the season-end, prices are ruling higher and that is the reason why exporters are reluctant," Rajah said.

In 2013-14, the coffee exports were 3.13 lakh tonnes, up 4.6 per cent over previous year's 2.99 lakh tonnes. In the current financial year, exports till September 17 were down 6.8 per cent at 1.37 lakh tonnes. In value, exports have fetched \$385 million against \$397 million in the same period a year ago.

### **Still in demand**

"There is no dearth of market for Indian coffees," said C Rajendra Prasad, Chairman and Managing Director, CCL Products (India) Ltd, a large exporter. On the contrary, the economic crisis in Europe could fuel more demand, Prasad said adding that the Indian coffee sells because of its quality and commands a premium.

The Coffee Board has projected a record output of 3.44 lakh tonnes for the 2014-15 season as per the post blossom estimates over previous year's 3.04 lakh tonnes

### **Arabian Sea storm may develop into a cyclone, target Gujarat**

After the Arabian Sea storm started rebuilding ending a brief pause, weather models have started re-plotting charts for the likely track for a developing tropical cyclone.

At least five leading models, including early projections by India Met Department, indicate that the cyclone might veer towards northwest Gujarat and adjoining Sindh coast in Pakistan for a landfall.

The Canadian Meteorological Centre subscribes to this view saying that the system would take a turn to the east over northeast Arabian Sea, but without suggesting an exact area of landfall.

The 21-member ensemble from the Global Forecast Model is more forthcoming, suggesting northwest Gujarat to be the area of landfall.

The UK Met model is the most forthright among all, with projected growth of the system as a very severe cyclone (wind speeds ranging between 177- 209 km/hr) and heading for northwest Gujarat.

The shift in cyclone track will take place under the influence of a western disturbance moving across the Arabian Gulf and towards Afghanistan, Pakistan and northwest India.

### **Westerly notified**

India Met has said in its evening bulletin on Friday that a western disturbance would start affecting the western Himalayan region from October 28. Being computer-simulated models, these projections can change over time.

This makes it imperative that the evolving weather system is tracked on a real-time basis, say experts.

Available indications indicate that it can grow to considerable strength. The month of October is known for vulnerability of the peninsular seas to these types of 'disturbances' from change in meteorological conditions associated with the monsoon transition.

### **Heavy rains**

Meanwhile on Friday, heavy rains continued to lash parts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, which are the two States with excess rainfall thus far during this northeast monsoon season.

Tamil Nadu falls in the rainfall excess category (+32 per cent) while Kerala followed (+18 per cent, 'normal' category).



Coastal and south interior Karnataka will start receiving meaningful showers as easterly flows from the Bay of Bengal head across the peninsula to feed the building cyclone in the Arabian Sea.

# Business Standard

Nabard rolls out Rs 100 cr scheme for fish farming

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) has rolled out Rs 100 crore area development scheme (ADS) on fresh water [fish farming](#) in five districts of the state- Balasore, Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj, Cuttack and Rayagada.

"The scheme covers five districts in Odisha in inland fishing activities. It has been formulated under the consultative process involving all the stakeholders", said A Chandrasekhar, general manager, Nabard.

The scheme was launched recently by H R Khan, Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in the presence of J K Singh Kharb, executive director of Allahabad Bank and P K Jena, regional director, RBI-Bhubaneswar.

While all the 12 blocks of Balasore district have been covered, one block each of Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj and Rayagada districts are included in the scheme. Two blocks of Cuttack district, namely Nischintkoili and Niali are considered under the ADS.

Out of the Rs 100 crore outlay for five districts, about Rs 75 crore will be in the form of bank credit and the balance will be invested by the beneficiaries.

Activities like fish farming in both new and renovated ponds, eco-hatcheries, integrated farming with horticulture and livestock, fish seed banks and aqua shops have been included in the scheme along with the

farm models.

Officials said the scheme will be operational from March 2015.

[Nabard](#) has stated that out of 121,000 hectares (ha) total water area available under ponds and tanks in Odisha, only 80,000 ha have been brought under aquaculture.

The average fish productivity of the state stands at 1000 kg per acre of pond, much below than the expected productivity of 2000 kg per acre. In neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, the average productivity is around 3000 kg per acre of pond.

On completion, Nabard expects an increase in productivity of ponds from the present level of 1000 kg per acre of pond to at least 2000 kg per acre.

The scheme targets an annual production of additional 3500 tonne of fresh water fishes, production of 250 tonne of prawn, 700,000 litres of milk, 15000 duck eggs, 4000 kg of duck meat and 20 tonne of poultry meat.

In addition, the scheme will result in direct self-employment opportunity for 10000 persons and indirect employment for around 45000 persons.

In a related development, Nabard has partnered Allahabad Bank for organizing financial literacy camps and opening of accounts under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana at all the semi-urban and rural branches of the PSU bank.

[NAFED](#) to invite Eol for import of 25K tonnes potatoes

In order to boost supply and contain rising [potato](#) prices, co-operative major [NAFED](#) today said it will invite expression of interest (Eol) this weekend from global suppliers for supplying 25,000 tonnes of potatoes.

Potato prices have shown a rising trend during the recent weeks and the commodity is being retailed at Rs 35-40 per kg in the National Capital.

The government had last week directed NAFED and the Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) to import potatoes to improve the domestic supply in the coming months.

"We are inviting the expression of interest (Eoi) from global suppliers for import of 25,000 tonnes potatoes," National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) Managing Director [R Rajagopalan](#) told PTI.

NAFED, which is importing potatoes for the first time, would like to see the response from suppliers before floating a full-fledged tender for import, he said.

"We have always imported onions and never done potatoes. This time, we are trying to import potatoes. First we are inviting Eoi to see responses from suppliers. Unless we know how many suppliers will come forward, there is no point going ahead with tenders," Rajagopalan said.

An advisement seeking Eoi from global suppliers for potato import has been cleared, "It will come out this weekend, either tomorrow or Sunday," he said.

The quantity has been fixed at 25,000 tonnes. Suppliers will require to supply the quality potatoes from any country of origin, he added.

"I don't think we need to be particular about the country of origin. If we are able to get potatoes in right quality specification even if it comes from China, then there should be no problem," the official said.

In June, the government had imposed a minimum export [price](#) (MEP) of \$450 per tonne on potatoes to increase domestic availability and cool prices.

At present, there is 30% import duty on potatoes. The stock of stored potatoes is getting exhausted and therefore the government has decided to import to boost availability till the new crop arrives from January-end.

India produced 44.3 million tonnes of potatoes in 2013-14 crop year, down 2.3% from the previous year.

### Govt to aid coffee growers in fight against pest attacks

The [commerce ministry](#) is waking up to [white stem borer](#)(WSB) pest attacks, which hits arabica [coffee production](#) year after year. The ministry has decided to set up an experts committee to help find a solution on the problem.

Earlier this week, Commerce Minister [Nirmala Sitharaman](#) assured growers that concerted efforts would be made to find a solution to the problem. She said the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) was being involved to help identify experts in this regard.

"At the moment, I am searching for a solution...We are forming a small group, with participants from the planters and industry, to understand the problem. With the help of ICAR, we will identify domain experts and give them a time-frame later. Before the next crop, they should at least give us the prevailing knowledge in this area and share it with growers," Sitharaman said.

She added arabica was very unique to India, as was the WSB problem. Growers in other countries weren't adversely affected because they were growing the robusta variety, she said. "Arabica has its own excellent value. We will look at it from the point of view of how to sustain and allow it to flourish," she said.

Through the years, widespread WSB attacks have led to planters in south India rapidly shifting from arabica to robusta plantation. Of the overall coffee acreage, 73 per cent was accounted for by arabica in 1950-51 (67,613 hectares out of 92,523 hectares); in 2012-13, this fell to 49.5 per cent (205,775 hectares out of 415,341 hectares). In 1950-51, arabica accounted for 15,511 tonnes of the overall coffee production of 18,893 tonnes; in 2013-14, it stood at 102,200 tonnes of the total production of 304,500 tonnes.

## ARABICA-ROBUSTA TREND

	ARABICA		ROBUSTA	
	Area (ha)	%*	Area (ha)	%*
1950-51	67,613	73.1	24,910	26.9
2012-13	205,775	49.5	209,566	50.5
	Production (tonne)	%**	Production (tonne)	%**
1950-51	15,511	82.1	3,382	17.9
2013-14	102,200	33.6	202,300	66.4

\* of total area under production; \*\* of total output

Source: Coffee Board

"The rapid pace at which arabica is being taken over by robu

sta will continue unless there is some drastic and decisive intervention. This is important, as traditional [arabica coffee](#) cultivation practices have ensured protection of biodiversity and ecosystem in the ecologically sensitive Western and Eastern Ghats. This needs to be reinstated through an adequate incentive mechanism," said Vijayan Rajes, president, United Planters' Association of Southern India.

The severity of WSB attacks has been such that many estates have resorted to uprooting arabica plants to avoid further damage. It is said the dry weather between October 2013 and April this year, as well as the high temperatures during the summer, aided the WSB attacks.

Rajes said it took five-six years to bring coffee estates hit by WSB back to shape. As growers required substantial capital for this, special packages should be provided for replanting and infilling, distinct from the current replanting scheme, he added.

Permanent solution on food security in WTO rules must: India



In a stern message, India has told the UN General Assembly that developing countries must have the freedom to use food reserves to feed the poor “without the threat of sanctions” and a permanent solution on food security with necessary changes in WTO rules is a must.

“The issue of food security is central to the pursuit of poverty eradication and sustainable development in developing countries and must be treated with the same urgency as other issues, if not more,” Counsellor in the Indian Mission to the UN Amit Narang said in a UN General Assembly session on ‘Macroeconomic Policy Questions: International Trade and Development’.

He termed as “paradoxical” that just as the international community is assigning a high priority to food security as part of the Post-2015 Development Agenda there seems reluctance in addressing the important issue as part of global trade rules.

“A permanent solution on food security with necessary changes in WTO rules, if required, is a must and cannot be kicked down the road,” Narang said.

He said that India had participated actively and “in good faith” in the Ninth Ministerial Conference of the WTO in Bali in December 2013 and the country remains committed to the Bali decisions, including the one on trade facilitation.

“India is a signatory to all the Bali decisions and has no intention of going back on them.

The concern that India has been constrained to flag, arises from the uneven progress on the Bali decisions,” Narang said.

“While all focus seems to be on the agreement on trade facilitation, the same sort of commitment is not evident on other Bali decisions, in particular the agreement on food security,” he said.

Narang stressed that the issue of food security must be taken forward in the WTO in the same time frame as other decisions taken in Bali such as trade facilitation.

“Overall balance is important even in a limited package of outcomes. The Bali outcomes were negotiated as a package and must be concluded as such,” he said, adding that “developing countries such as India must have the freedom to use food reserves to feed their poor without the threat of sanctions.”

He expressed hope that the international community will join hands for the implementation of the Bali decisions in a balanced manner and as a single undertaking.

He said that India has stressed that trade and investment and an open, rules-based, transparent and non-discriminatory WTO-based trading system can play an important role in restoring global growth.

“As we collectively deliberate on the contours of a Post-2015 Development Agenda, it is time we unleash the full potential of international trade as an engine for growth and tool for sustainable development,” he added.

He underscored that strengthening the rules-based multilateral trading regime under WTO is vital and the recent trend of increasing fragmentation in favour of regional and ‘plurilateral’ processes is a challenge to the centrality and credibility of the multilateral trading system.

He stressed on the need to make the international trading regime more equitable and

development-oriented in order for developing countries to truly benefit from international trade. “India is a strong supporter of the multilateral trading system and is committed to the WTO, which is in the best interests of developing countries,” he said. “What is needed is collective political will to effect timely corrections to imbalances in the working of the system and its rules to ensure that the WTO works impartially and fairly in the interest of



all its members and not just a select few,” he said. Noting that there is an urgent need to conclude the Doha Round as per its development mandate, Narang said the round is not about the perpetuation of structural flaws in global trade, especially in agriculture. “This Round is also not about negotiating livelihood security and subsistence of hundreds of millions of farmers. Instead, this Round is about creating new opportunities and economic growth for developing countries in all sectors,” Narang said. “This Round is about aiding the efforts of developing countries for providing food security to their people and ending poverty,” he said. “Indeed the criticism about the Doha Development Round, that it is scarcely about ‘Development’ and is a round only in terms of its proclivity to go round and round in circles, needs to be addressed purposefully,” he added. India has made it clear that it would stick to its position on the food security issue at the WTO as it is the sovereign duty of the government to protect the interest of its poor and that it would not ratify Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) until a permanent solution was found on the food security issue. New Delhi has asked WTO to amend the norms for calculating agriculture subsidies so that India could continue to procure food grains from farmers at minimum support price and sell them to poor at cheaper rates without violating the norms. - See more at:

### **Another Maharashtra verdict: Sugar goes private**



For decades, sugar in Maharashtra has been synonymous with cooperatives. Not anymore. And the trend of their marginalisation is

unlikely to be reversed under the new BJP-led government — for, the list of the new private sugar barons includes politicians from all parties.

The sugar year ended September saw 64 private factories crush and produce 22.37 lakh tonnes (lt), or 28.8 per cent of the state's output.

Compare this to just three in 1998-99 — the Doshi family's Ravalgaon Sugar Farm, New Phaltan Sugar Works of the Aptes, and the Akluj (Solapur)-based Saswad Mali Sugar Factory — with a combined production of 1.23 lt or 2.3 per cent of Maharashtra's sugar.

The numbers weren't very different even in 2004-05: 19 factories, 1.77 lt production, and 8 per cent share.

"Private mills have really come up in the last 5-6 years under the Congress-NCP rule. Today, they produce nearly 30 per cent, and cooperatives 70 per cent. This ratio could even be reversed to 70:30 in the next 4-5 years," said Raju Shetti, farmer leader and the Swabhimani Paksha Lok Sabha MP from Hatkanangle.

B B Thombare, general secretary of the West Indian Sugar Mills Association, projected the private share in Maharashtra to touch 40 per cent in the new 2014-15 sugar year, and 55 per cent in the next 3-4 years. "By then, only 15-20 cooperatives will remain (against the 93 that crushed in 2013-14 and 135 in 2007-08). Only the better managed ones will survive," he said.

Thombare was managing director of two cooperatives — the late Vilasrao Deshmukh's Manjara Shetkari Mill in Latur, and the Vaidyanath Factory founded by the late Gopinath Munde at Parli (Beed) — before promoting Natural Sugar & Allied Industries.

His company's mill at Kallam (Osmanabad) was the first private unit commissioned in 1999-2000 after the Centre de-licensed the sugar industry in August 2008.

## TOP 10 PRIVATE MILLS

<b>COMPANY</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>OUTPUT*</b>
Shri Ambalika Sugar	Karjat, Ahmadnagar	96,373
Shree Renuka Sugars	Ichalkaranji, Kolhapur	96,265
Shri Gurudatt Sugars	Shirol, Kolhapur	89,539
Daund Sugar	Daund, Pune	75,000
Baramati Agro	Indapur, Pune	67,334
Olam International	Chandgad, Kolhapur	66,126
Lokmangal Sugar	South Solapur	64,440
Matoshri Laxmi Sugar	Akkalkot, Solapur	57,500
Jarandeshwar Sugar Mills	Koregaon, Satara	56,650
Cane Agro Energy	Kadegaon, Sangli	55,064

\* IN TONNES, FOR 2013-14 SUGAR YEAR (OCT-SEPT)

### LOSS OF FAVOUR

De-licensing ended the preference given to cooperatives in establishing mills. Anyone could now set up a factory at a distance of 15 km or more from an existing one.

“De-licensing apart, the state government withdrawing support for starting cooperative mills has also been a reason for new factories being largely in the private sector,” said Madhavrao Ghatge, chairman of Shri Gurudatt Sugars at Shirol, Kolhapur.

The Maharashtra government previously contributed up to three-fourths of the share capital of any cooperative mill, typically funded through 40 per cent equity and 60 per cent debt. It also gave guarantees for loans raised from financial institutions. Farmer-members, therefore, had to chip in with only a tenth of the project cost, with redemption of both government equity (at face value) and debt done by deducting a portion of the cane price payable over time.


Such assistance stopped after 2002-03 — when a combination of drought and a crash in sugar prices led to loan defaults by mills, and the institutions invoked the government guarantees.

“The ensuing financial burden made the government reluctant to support the starting of new factories,” said M G Joshi, managing director of the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories.

Also, beginning 2007-08, the Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank started to attach the assets of defaulting mills, and auction them to private buyers. The state government allowed this to enable recovery of dues of over Rs 1,100 crore. Some 26 cooperatives have been sold so far, giving a further fillip to privatisation via acquisition as against establishing greenfield projects.

## NEW-OLD BARONS

**MAHARASHTRA'S SUGAR BELT**



**POLITICIAN BARONS**

<p><b>SUBHASH DESHMUKH</b>  <b>BJP</b>; won Solapur South                      Lokmangal Group; 3 mills; 1.43 lakh tonnes in 2013-'14</p>	<p><b>BABASAHEB MOHANRAO PATIL</b>  <b>NCP</b>; lost to Independent Vinayakrao Jadhav Patil in Ahmadpur                      Siddhi Sugar, Ujana; 53,735 t</p>
<p><b>AJIT PAWAR</b>  <b>NCP</b>; won Baramati                      Shri Ambalika Sugar, Daund Sugar, Jarandeshwar Sugar Mills (combined output 2.28 lakh tonnes) have directors said to be linked to him</p>	<p><b>RATNAKAR MANIKRAO GUTTE</b>                      Rashtriya Samaj Paksha candidate in Gangakhed; lost Gangakhed Sugar &amp; Energy; 54,950 tonnes</p>
<p><b>RAJENDRA PAWAR</b>                      Ajit's cousin, Sharad Pawar's nephew                      Baramati Agro mills, Indapur and Kannad; 86,891 tonnes</p>	<p><b>BABANRAO SHINDE</b>  <b>NCP</b>; won Madha                      Vitthalrao Shinde Cooperative Factory, Madha</p>
<p><b>NITIN GADKARI</b>  <b>BJP</b>; union transport minister                      3 factories; 61,933 tonnes</p>	<p><b>SANJAY SHINDE</b>                      Babanrao's brother                      Vitthal Corporation Mill</p>
<p><b>VINOD TAWDE</b>  <b>BJP</b>; won Borivali                      Shreenath Mhaskoba Mill, Daund; 41,155 tonnes</p>	<p><b>DILIPRAO DESHMUKH</b>                      Vilasrao Deshmukh's brother                      Jagruti Sugar &amp; Allied Industries, Deoni</p>
<p><b>SIDDHARAM MHETRE</b>  <b>Congress</b>; former state minister                      Matoshni Laxmi Sugar, Akkalkot; 57,500 tonnes</p>	<p><b>PATANGRAO KADAM</b>  <b>Congress</b>; won Palus-Kadegaon                      Sonhira Cooperative, Kadegaon</p>
<p><b>PRUTHVIRAJ DESHMUKH</b>  <b>BJP</b>; lost to Cong's Patangrao Kadam in Palus-Kadegaon                      Cane Agro Energy, Kadegaon; 55,064 tonnes</p>	<p><b>MOHANRAO KADAM</b>                      Patangrao's brother                      Udgiri Sugar &amp; Power</p>
	<p><b>BABANRAO PACHPUTE</b>  <b>BJP</b>; former NCP minister; lost in Shrigonda                      ShriSaikrupa Sugar, Shrigonda</p>

Maharashtra's private sugar promoters can be put into three broad categories.

First, homegrown 'professional' entrepreneurs like Thombare and Ghatge. Second, 'corporates' such as Olam International, Shree Renuka Sugars and Dalmia Bharat (whose factory near Kolhapur, earlier a cooperative, has India's highest sugar recovery of 13.7 per cent).

The majority of private barons, however, are politicians.

The BJP's Subhash Deshmukh, who on Sunday won the Solapur South assembly seat, heads the Lokmangal Group, which controls three mills that had a combined output of 1.43 lt in 2013-14.

But probably even bigger are three companies with common directors said to be linked to former deputy chief minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar:

Shri Ambalika Sugar, Daund Sugar and Jarandeshwar Sugar Mills.

Together, they produced 2.28 lt [See table].

Ajit Pawar's cousin, Rajendra, is chairman of Baramati Agro, which had a production of 86,891 tonnes from two mills at Indapur (Pune) and Kannad (Aurangabad). Both Ajit and Rajendra are nephews of NCP president Sharad Pawar.

Other important politician-sugar entrepreneurs include union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari (three factories; 61,933 tonnes), senior Maharashtra BJP leader Vinod Tawde (Shreenath Mhaskoba Mill at Daund, Pune; 41,155 tonnes), former Maharashtra rural development minister Siddharam Mhetre of the Congress (Matoshri Laxmi Sugar at Akkalkot, Solapur; 57,500 tonnes), Pruthviraj Deshmukh, the BJP candidate from Palus-Kadegaon who lost to the Congress's Patangrao Kadam on Sunday (Cane Agro Energy at Kadegaon, Sangli; 55,064 tonnes), and the NCP's Babasaheb Mohanrao Patil, who was edged out by the Independent candidate Vinayakrao Jadhav Patil at the Ahmadpur assembly seat on Sunday (Siddhi Sugar at Ujana, Latur; 53,735 tonnes).

It is not just the main parties. Ratnakar Manikrao Gutte, chairman of Gangakhed Sugar & Energy near Parbhani (54,950 tonnes), was fielded by the Rashtriya Samaj Paksha, a BJP alliance partner in Gangakhed, and lost in a close contest with the NCP candidate.

The ranks of private millers also include the siblings or close relatives of established cooperative magnates. So, Vilasrao Deshmukh's younger brother, Diliprao, controls Jagruti Sugar & Allied Industries at Deoni, Latur.

Babanrao Shinde, who heads the Vitthalrao Shinde Cooperative Factory at Madha (Solapur), won the Madha seat for the NCP on Sunday. And his brother, Sanjay, has his own Vitthal Corporation Mill.

Former forest minister Patangrao Kadam of the Congress, who defeated the BJP's Pruthviraj Deshmukh to win the Palus-Kadegaon assembly seat on Sunday, is the founder of the Sonhira Cooperative at Kadegaon in Sangli. Kadam's brother, Mohanrao, runs Udgiri Sugar & Power.

#### SOME HICCUPS

But not all private mills are doing well. The factory of Shri Saikrupa Sugar at Shrigonda (Ahmednagar), belonging to former tribal affairs minister Babanrao Pachpute of the NCP, crushed no cane in 2013-14. Pachpute jumped ship to the BJP before the elections, but lost in Shrigonda to the NCP's Kundlikrao Jagtap.

Also, Maharashtra's private factories are relatively small. The biggest one's production (Shri Ambalika; 96,373 tonnes) was way below the 1,79,543 tonnes of the largest cooperative (Jawahar Shetkari at Hatkanangle, Kolhapur). They are even smaller vis-à-vis their Uttar Pradesh counterparts: Bajaj Hindusthan and Balrampur Chini produce 10-15 lt annually.

But there is no doubt they are there to stay and grow. The Maharashtra election results will not change that.