

THE HINDU

Now, App for agriculture

In this age of mobile application for almost everything, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has come up with a mobile application meant for farmers.

NABARD, which is co-sponsoring the Krishi Mela at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, is offering the mobile application to farmers free, with the help of Jayalaxmi Agro Tech of Hagaribommanahalli, Bellary district, which has developed the mobile application.

The initiative is aimed at providing farmers an easy and user-friendly mobile technology solution.

On Sunday, Chief General Manager of NABARD Regional Office, Bangalore, G.R. Chintala, released the farmer-friendly mobile application. NABARD officials T. Ramesh and Sheela M. Bhandarkar were present.

The crop-specific mobile application for agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry is available in English and various regional languages, including Kannada.

The application helps farmers in taking the right, and timely, decision by providing them updated information on agriculture. It provides farmers choices between the right varieties and the best practices for a better yield. Using the application, farmers can get information on crops such as pomegranate, potato, onion, sugarcane, chilly, cotton, banana, papaya, and also, dairy farming and sheep rearing.

NABARD is sponsoring the application and is uploading it free on mobile phones brought by farmers visiting the NABARD stall at the Krishi Mela in Dharwad. District Development Manager Sheela Bhandarkar said that the application would be uploaded on farmers mobile phones free during the next two days of the Krishi Mela.

Subsequently, farmers who want to download the application will have to pay for it.

NABARD is offering it free to farmers during the next two days of the Krishi Mela

Free flow, high returns!



The paddy produce at a rice mill in Nellore District. Photo: K. Ravikumar

Illegal transport of rice from Nellore to TN a long-time challenge. The total production of rice in Nellore district as of now is 6.5 lakh tonnes a year. Of this, 2.5 lakh tonnes are set apart to meet the requirements of the 'Mana Biyyam' programme.

The Nellore district administration is grappling with a serious challenge of illegal transport of rice to Tamil Nadu from various parts of Nellore district.

A few months ago, the Revenue authorities had recommended that the government allow free movement of rice as a solution to the issue. They had also suggested increasing the rate of local production of paddy.

The seizure of 27 lorries with rice loads worth Rs. 2.3 crore at one go recently near the inter-State border brought the issue of illegal transport to the fore once again. While police have stepped up vigil, millers are mounting pressure on the government for issuing more permits in accordance with the rise in production.

Illegal transport is being resorted to by almost all millers under what is known as 'jackpot transport'. They call it so because of the high returns involved in the process, as they can evade taxes.

The total production of rice in Nellore district as of now is 6.5 lakh tonnes a year. Of this, 2.5 lakh tonnes are set apart to meet the requirements of the 'Mana Biyyam' programme. Also, permits are issued to millers to transport as much as 65,000 tonnes to other States.

"Clearly, there is excess production of nearly 3 lakh tonnes. Where should all this go? We have written to the government to issue more permits or allow free transport to resolve the problem permanently," said District Collector N. Srikanth.

Nellore District Rice Millers Association president Y. Rangayya Naidu said there was no truth in the allegations that the rice meant for distribution under the Public Distribution System (PDS) was being diverted to other markets. Given the current situation, the overall production figures and the problems facing farmers and millers should be taken into consideration for resolving these issues, he added.

According to rules, only 25 per cent of the district levy or rice can be legally transported to other States. At the same time, it is alleged that the diversion of PDS rice is taking place at the level of mandal-level storage points.

The Civil Supplies Department comes under the scanner whenever rice-laden lorries without authorised waybills are seized by the authorities. In a recent incident when 27 lorries were seized on one single night, the Civil Supplies officials were forced to register 6-A cases for the first time against rice millers for lack of proper records and variations in stocks. These charges are filed under the AP Rice Procurement (Levy) Order, 1984 and the AP Scheduled Commodities Dealers (LS&R) Order, 2008.

RULES SET ASIDE

1. Allowing free movement of rice is the solution to illegal transport, according to Revenue authorities
2. Increasing the rate or local production of paddy will also go a long way in curbing the practice
3. According to rules, only 25 per cent of the district levy can be legally transported to other States

4. The issue came to the fore after the recent seizure of 27 lorries with rice loads worth Rs. 2.3 crore

5. Millers are mounting pressure on government for issuing more permits in accordance with production

6. Millers resort to illegal transport of rice under 'jackpot transport', which fetches them more returns

QUANTITY QUESTION

*Total production of rice in Nellore dt.: 6.5 lakh tonnes a year

*2.5 lakh tonnes are set apart for 'Mana Biyyam' programme

QUOTE

"There is excess production of nearly 3 lakh tonnes. Where should all this go? We have written to the government to issue more permits or allow free transport to resolve the problem permanently."

A food system for the future



The Hindu

FIRST MOVES: Supporting smallholder farmers so that they are able to grow, sell and eat more nutritious foods is crucial. Picture shows a paddy field near Shillong, Meghalaya. File photo: Ritu Raj Konwar

The world cannot afford to talk about hunger without addressing climate change, food production without sustainability or growth without good nutrition

With the world's population predicted to reach 9 billion by 2050, we collectively face a dual challenge: ensuring that everyone will have access to affordable, nutritious food without decimating the earth's natural resources in the process. This is easier said than done. Our current food system is dysfunctional both in its impact on people and the planet. Unless we change course, we will fail to meet this challenge. Today, millions do not have enough to eat and billions lack the right nutrients to be healthy. The United Nations' food organisations — the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) — have just published their annual report on global food insecurity, which highlights that despite some evidence of progress, 805 million people, or 1 in 9 people, still suffer from hunger.

Poor diets stunt the growth of 162 million children every year, 97 per cent of them in the developing world, trapping communities in a cycle of poverty and ill-health. The consequences for those affected can be devastating. Malnourished children tend to start school later, have poorer levels of concentration and lower scores in cognitive ability tests. Many carry these burdens through into later life.

Damaging food system

According to WHO, a staggering 2 billion people are affected by iron deficiency which contributes to anaemia. More than 250 million children suffer from Vitamin A deficiency which is a major public health challenge in more than half the countries on the planet — with half a million going blind each year. Half of these children die within 12 months of going blind.

Meanwhile, 1.3 billion of us are classified as overweight or obese, fuelled by a food system that is damaging not just our bodies but the environment too. If trends towards western diets continue, the impact of food production alone will reach, if not exceed, the global targets for total greenhouse gases. Our current agricultural production system is inefficient. We continue to destroy tropical forests for agricultural expansion and this contributes 12 per cent to the total warming of the planet today. And we waste much of the food we produce. What is a crisis for many now could become a catastrophe for more in the future because of the effects of climate change. Climate change is already making people hungry, by disrupting crop yields, pushing prices up and increasing food insecurity for large numbers of the world's population. And it is not just food but nutrients that are becoming scarcer as the climate changes.

A study led by the Harvard School of Public Health found that rising levels of CO₂ are stripping staple foods of vital nutrients. If these climate and socio-economic trends continue, the number of undernourished children in Africa alone is expected to rise tenfold by 2050. It is against this backdrop that world leaders came together at the Climate Summit in New York to secure buy-in for a global climate deal next year. Governments meeting at the U.N. General Assembly now will review proposals for the post-2015 development goals that aim to eliminate poverty and hunger for good.

If we fail to act, we risk a downward spiral in which poverty and climate impacts reinforce each other. It is the poorest communities that will suffer the worst effects of climate change, including increased hunger and malnutrition as crop production and livelihoods are threatened. And poverty is a driver of climate change, as desperate communities resort to unsustainable use of resources to meet current needs. But there is an alternative path. In the face of climate change, our basic food systems have to be reimagined so that the world is producing nutritious food in a more sustainable way that increases livelihoods.

Targets and a vision

This means supporting the world's smallholder farmers so that they are able to grow, sell and eat more nutritious foods; it means converting degraded lands into productive farms, and fortifying staple foods with essential nutrients like iron and zinc. It also means scaling up existing sustainable interventions that we know already work extremely well like breastfeeding for infants. All of this can play a role in reducing malnutrition. All of this will rely on ambition, innovation and leadership.

We come from very different backgrounds, but we share the belief that it's only by bringing together business, civil society and governments that we will find solutions that can be scaled up for maximum impact. Countries, companies and NGOs can create a better future, leading by example and catalysing action in their peer groups or industries. But we need ambitious targets and a common vision. We cannot afford to talk about hunger without addressing climate change, food production without sustainability or growth without good nutrition.

As climate and development goals are debated since the conclusion of the U.N. climate summit and the months ahead, it should be with these links in mind. A healthier, more sustainable future is possible. But, the sustainability, food and health nexus must be dealt with together if we are going to fix the global food system.

(Paul Polman is Chairman of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Marc Van Ameringen is Executive Director of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition.)

Ebola prompts food shortage fears

Outbreak has crippled domestic production and increased country's reliance on imports



Liberia's government is struggling to secure food supplies as quarantines and border closures aimed at containing the Ebola outbreak disrupt its farmers and pile pressure on food imports.

The agricultural sector has been hardest hit by the Ebola crisis, which has crippled domestic food production, said Axel Addy, Liberia's Minister of Commerce and Industry.

Measures to stem the spread of Ebola have increased Liberia's reliance on food imports, which last year comprised about 80 per cent of all foodstuff, according to the World Food Programme (WFP).

Liberia has brought in food provisions that are expected to last until December, said Mr. Addy, but concerns over diminishing food production in the country are mounting.

Mr. Addy said: "Liberia's staple [food] is rice, and so prior to coming [to Europe] I spent several weeks negotiating with importers to get an adequate supply of rice into the country. As I left [Liberia] we were actually offloading one vessel and another vessel was ready to offload."

He added: "We will get our rice supply that will take us to November and we have several lined vessels up that will take us through January. On that side we have been able to manage [Ebola's effect on food supplies], although at a higher cost." Earlier this month the WFP warned that "disruptions in cross-border trade and marketing activities have resulted in sharp price rises, affecting the food security situation of large numbers of people."

The country's food security has taken a backseat to measures aimed at containing Ebola, which often require entire villages and communities to be cut off, said WFP spokeswoman Frances Kennedy.

Before the Ebola outbreak, Liberia's food insecurity was deemed "unacceptably high" with 1.2 million people, or 41 per cent of the population, unable to lead a healthy and active lifestyle due to malnutrition, said a report by Liberia's Ministry of Agriculture, the WFP and UNICEF.

Economy come to a 'halt'

Liberians are scrambling to secure food supplies before quarantines are enforced, according to Ms Kennedy, who returned from the country on September 11. "Food was a great concern, people were very concerned about how they were going to be able to provide for themselves and their families going forward." Liberia's economy has come to a "grinding halt" after Ebola fears led miners to suspend operations and businesses to close their doors. It has slashed its projected growth rate for the mining sector from 4 per cent this year to 2.5 per cent in 2015, Mr. Addy said.

The cancellation of international flights to Liberia have hurt the country's economy. "We are being penalised by the stigma of Ebola," Mr. Addy said, bemoaning that only two cross-border flights are still operating.

He is optimistic that Liberia will be able to secure more food imports, but was worried about Ebola's impact on the country's ability to produce food. "Lofa — the county second hardest hit by the epidemic — is our breadbasket and a major source of our food," he said.

The WFP said it would distribute foodstuff to 4,05,000 people in each of Liberia's counties. More than 690 metric tonnes have been distributed so far, while 500 metric tonnes have been held in reserve, the agency said. — © Guardian Newspapers Limited, 2014

Focus on farm sector: Naveen



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurating the Regional Agricultural Fair at Sambalpur on Sunday.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated a regional agricultural fair at Sambalpur on Sunday reiterating his government's commitment to give a push to farm sector. "We have made budgetary provision of Rs. 9,500 crore for agricultural sector during this fiscal. Availability of fertilizer and seeds is being given foremost importance," said Mr. Patnaik.

"Moreover, improvement in irrigation coverage, encouragement for agro-based industries and farm mechanization have been identified as thrust areas," he added.

During his visit to Sambalpur, the Chief Minister laid foundation for a market yard at Nildunguri along National Highway 53 which would be a trade hub for agriculture and horticulture produces. The yard would be spread over 60 acres of land.

As many as 132 stalls have been put up at the agricultural fair. Farmers from different parts of western Odisha are exhibiting their produces. State Agriculture Minister Pradip Maharathi and people's representatives from Sambalpur and Bargarh districts were present during the inauguration.

Banking on bio-pesticides to reduce crop losses



Did you know that fear-struck hi-tech farmers are spraying chemicals to save their crops grown under poly-houses from diseases.

The use of chemicals has increased as farmers are desperate to control nematode, a variety of harmful microbes in the soil which affect the plant root system, and causes losses up to 70 per cent.

This is a cause for concern, farmers have not been able to prevent crop losses despite huge spending on chemical sprays. While the economy of hi-tech farmers is in doldrums, with nearly 60 per cent of the poly house cultivation in the State being hit by nematodes, the environment too is affected by the extent of chemical application. All this makes the consumer ponder over health hazards.

To provide a solution to the woes of farmers, consumers and the environment, the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) has launched a nationwide programme to popularise an eco-friendly method to manage the nematode problem through bio-pesticides developed by its scientists a few years ago.

M.S. Rao, Principal Scientist in the IIHR's Division of Entomology and Nematology, explains that the method multiplies useful microorganisms in the soil to fight nematodes.

According to him, such technologies come at a price which is just about one-third of chemical methods. What is important is that these bio-agents also help increase plant growth and yield, besides enhancing the shelf-life of the produce, Dr. Rao says.

The IIHR is trying to spread awareness on bio-pesticides among innovative farmers in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and the north-east.

It organised a field day on Saturday to demonstrate the impact of bio-agents as an alternative to chemicals at the plots of two farmers in Agalagurki village of Chickballapur district.

Farmer Ramanjani R. says he was able to reduce chemical application by about 90 per cent (worth around Rs. one lakh an acre) through the use of bio-agents. It also helped increase yield by about 30 per cent. The farmer is relieved that he can make up for losses he suffered last year owing to nematodes.

For more information on bio-pesticides, interested persons may contact Principal Scientist B. Narayanaswamy, Head of Department of Agriculture Technology Information Centre, IIHR, on 080-28446815 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on all working days.

IIHR spreading awareness on eco-friendly methods to manage nematodes

The bio-agents help increase plant growth, yield and enhance shelf-life

Students collect 750 kg plastics waste during cleaning drive

The National Service Scheme members of SNR Sons College collected plastics and other waste from the foothills of Marudhamalai and areas in the vicinity of the temple under the 'Cleaning Environment Programme'. A release said that the 60 students who participated in the function collected more than 750 kg plastics. Forest Department staff helped the students and the college faculty guided them.

More than 800 graduands received undergraduate and post graduate degree certificates at the 14th graduation day ceremony held at Dr. N.G.P. Arts and Science College.

A release said that the college honoured 38 students who had obtained university ranks. Clifford Mohan Pai, Associate vice president, HR Business Leader and Head – Employee Relations, Infosys, was the chief guest. Principal P.R. Muthuswamy presented the academic report. Mr. Pai spoke about commitment to excellence, dreaming big and not being afraid of failure. Nalla G. Palaniswami and Dr. Thavamani D. Palaniswami, chairman and secretary respectively, were also present on the occasion.

The eighth orientation day of Info Institute of Engineering for first year B.E. and B.Tech. students was held recently at the college.

A release said that the programme enabled the students understand studying engineering, career options and the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead of them. Noted speaker K. Gnanasambandan spoke to the students. He urged the students to respect parents and pursue knowledge with all sincerity. Secretary of the college Chitra Manohar told the students the college's values.

Dr. SNS Rajalakshmi College of Arts and Science recently conducted graduation day, which began with a welcome address by Principal G. Gnanasekaran. Principal, Thassim Beevi Abdul Kadar College for Women, Kilakarai, S. Sumayaa delivered the graduation day address. She asked the students to be job providers and not job seekers and suggested that they take initiatives in life, be efficient, show commitment, set goals, have self-confidence and take risks to become successful entrepreneurs. As many as 817 graduands received graduation certificates.

Nehru Group of Institutions recently held a function to inaugurate the first year classes for MBA and MCA students.

A release said that R. Moses Daniel, Principal, NITM, P. Krishnakumar, CEO and Secretary, NGI, were present at the inauguration. The latter delivered the presidential address.

Sankara Institute of Management inaugurated the classes for the first year of the 14th batch of MBA students. Head of the Department L. Gandhi, Secretary T. P. Ramachandran, and other faculty were present at the inauguration. Joint Secretary Kalyana Raman addressed the students. P. Mahesh Kumar, Chief Advocate and Founder, Wallclifs Law Firm, delivered the chief guest address. The college launched a management dictionary on the occasion.

The students association of Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering of Kalaignar Karunanidhi Institute of Technology conducted a technical seminar on 'Future Trends and Career Opportunities in Telecommunication'.

A release said that T. Chandrasekaran, Director, Nicheken Technologies Pvt. Ltd., addressed the students on job opportunities in electronics and communication engineering.

Principal Mohan Das Gandhi and Director P. Anabalagan were present at the inauguration.

KPR Institute of Engineering and Technology has established the Young Entrepreneurial Club. A release said that Vishwanathan Sahasranamam, General Manager, Coimbatore Innovation and Business Incubator, inaugurated the club and spoke to the students.

He said entrepreneurs were wealth creators. S. Sivasankaran, Collector, EDC, listed out the activities planned for the academic year.

Avinashilingam University recently conducted a research convention on Research Ethics Post Research Methods. A release said that the event focussed on research ethics, intellectual property rights and patenting and indexing and impact factor on journals. Ram Rajasekharan, Director, Central Food Technological Research Institute, spoke on the occasion. Vice Chancellor Sheela Ramachandran was present at the inauguration. S. Premakumai, Dean, Faculty of Community Education, welcomed the gathering.

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University recently hosted a function to welcome post graduate programme first year students. S. Divakar Durairaj, Dean, Agricultural Engineering College and Research Institute, asked the students to turn social entrepreneurs. N. Raghupathy, Director, Students' Welfare, spoke about the job opportunities that awaited the students. K. Ramasamy, Vice

Chancellor, urged the students to look for information on the web and also in social networking sites. More than 150 students participated in the programme.

Sri Krishna College of Technology recently conducted an orientation programme for students. S. Malarvizhi, Chairperson, welcomed the gathering. Kavidasan, Director, Roots Industries India Limited, was the chief guest.

He urged the students to be not scared of failure, continue to work hard. Determination, dedication, devotion and discipline, he said, were the keys to success.

Robert Bosch Engineering and Business Solutions recently opened the PST Tech – Robert Bosch Automotive Electronics Laboratory at the college at Rs. 12 lakh. The company would invest the money in two phases.

The second phase would be opened at a later date.

The lab would provide the much-needed live exposure to automotive embedded software development to over 300 students from various departments.

The lab contained freescale microcontroller – a kit with all the advanced features that was necessary for any automotive embedded software development. Krishnan V., vice president, Engineering, said that the opening of the lab was part of the effort to strengthen the industry-academia connect.

P.A. College of Education recently organised 'Citizenship Training Camp'. The programme was part of an eight-day workshop on multi-skill training programme for student teachers to enhance their knowledge in theatrical customs.

At the inauguration of the programme, S. Selvin, Principal, welcomed the gathering. P. Appukutty, Chairman, spoke on educational technology. Lakshmi Appukutty presided over the function. Shanmugaraja, actor, inaugurated the programme.

Sankara College of Science and Commerce recently secured the NAAC 'A' grade accreditation.

A release said that as part of the accreditation the college opened the Internal Quality Assurance Cell. Sheela Ramachandran, Vice Chancellor, Avinashilingam University, inaugurated the cell.

The management members and students of NGM College paid tribute to Swami Vivekananda on the occasion of the saint's 112th death anniversary.

A release said that the programme started with the students singing songs in praise of Swami Vivekananda. Thirunavukkarasu from Swami Vivekananda Association, Pollachi, lighted the lamp to mark the inauguration of the function.

The college president B.K. Krishnaraj Vanavarayar delivered the presidential address by highlighting the man-making, nation-building philosophy of the Swamiji.

He said that the students today had a choice – to get lost in a crowd or stand out in a crowd. In order to make the right choice in life, the students must think and act differently.

Bhavani farmers go for direct sowing of paddy

Demonstration of direct sowing of paddy on a one-acre farm in Mayilampadi Panchayat in Bhavani Taluk earlier this year by the Agriculture Department has delivered the desired outcome.

Direct sowing in the current cultivation season has been taken up by farmers in Bhavani in 50 acres, Assistant Director of Agriculture, Bhavani, A. Nachimuthu, said.

The trial was undertaken on the demonstration plot of a farmer with incentive of Rs. 4,000 provided through Agriculture Technology Management Agency. The cultivator Meganathan spent Rs. 15,000 per acre and harvested 7,500 kg of paddy that reflected a 30 per cent rise in productivity. Unlike the transplantation method that requires 20 kg seeds, the requirement for direct sowing was only three kilograms, and the water requirement is also lower. There is substantial savings since the labour is lesser, official sources added.

Siddaramaiah promises funds for research and development in farming

Farmers told to grow staple food such as 'jowar' and 'ragi'



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah looking at a banana variety at the Krishi Mela at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, on Sunday.—Photo: by special arrangement

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has promised sufficient funding for research and development for strengthening the farm sector and farmers.

Inaugurating the Krishi Mela at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, here on Sunday, Mr. Siddaramiah said the achievements in terms of productivity in agriculture would be undermined if it failed to improve the lives of farmers. Agriculture sector could not flourish in future unless it was made a profitable venture. Agricultural scientists, experts and institutes should focus on strengthening the farm sector by empowering the farmer. The government was ready to support any such initiatives, he said.

The total arable area in the State was reducing due to urbanisation and other factors on the one side and the population was increasing on the other. "As land could not be created, we have to find ways to produce more foodgrain on small areas. The government has plans to develop dry land farming in the State and earmarked Rs. 500 crore for the purpose in the budget. The government will also give priority to construction of warehouses and cold storages to minimise wastage which stands at 30 per cent in farm sector," he said.

Mr. Siddaramaiah appealed to the farmers to grow the staple food like 'jowar' and 'ragi' so that the government could distribute them under the Anna Bhagya scheme. He said the government had plans to distribute them through the public distribution system in areas where these grains were staple food.

Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, H.K. Patil; Minister of State for Agriculture Krishna Byre Gowda; and Minister of State for Food and Civil Supplies Dinesh Gundu Rao were present.

Farmers throng UAS campus

The campus of the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad, here, literally turned into a sea of humanity as a large number of people, particularly farmers, thronged the Krishi Mela here on Sunday.

An estimated five lakh people visited the mela, according to the university authorities. Nearly 500 stalls have been put up for exhibition-cum-sale of farming equipment, fertilizer and seeds. Major manufacturers of the agricultural equipment, tools and machinery have set up their stalls here.

Farmer A.I. Nadakattin has displayed a land crusher machine, tools for preparing land for sowing, and automatic sowing machine among others.

Making friends with coconut trees

YMCA, Coconut Development Board train coconut palm-climbers under 'Friends of Coconut Tree'



new heights: Training in coconut-palm climbing being imparted to trainees by the Kollam YMCA at Pullichira under the 'Friends of Coconut Tree' programme. —Photo: C. Suresh Kumar

Many may not be aware of it, but the Kollam chapter of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) has been making valuable contribution towards promoting coconut farming in the State.

The YMCA joined hands with the Coconut Development Board (CDB) to launch 'Friends of Coconut Tree.' The three-year-old initiative has resulted in the creation of a dedicated corps of 1,000 trained coconut palm-climbers across the State, 80 of whom are women.

The programme is being religiously managed by YMCA president George Oommen, who retired as the State's Joint Director of Agriculture.

The funds come from the CDB but the YMCA provides theoretical and practical training plus accommodation at its 2.8-acre Pullichira complex, near here.

Mr. Oommen said that the trainees pass out after a week as de facto 'coconut palm doctors.'

After training, each of them gets a palm-climbing device the costs Rs.4,000 as a compliment from the CDB.

Perambalur to churn out cornflakes for UN programme



Machinery for making cornflakes being installed at Perambalur.— Photo: B.Velankanni Raj

Cornflakes will soon be produced from maize in Perambalur. A cornflakes processing unit will start functioning at the Small Industries Development Corporation (SIDCO) industrial estate at Ilambalur in Perambalur.

“Machinery is being installed currently. The unit would start producing cornflakes in 15 to 20 days,” said V.Sollin Selvan, a mechanical engineering graduate who is setting up the unit.

He has got a subsidy of Rs.50 lakh from the State government for the unit. Motivated by Darez Ahamed, Perambalur District Collector, who gives thrust to value-addition of agriculture produce to enhance the income of farmers and traders, Sollin Selvan has come forward to start the unit.

“The project cost is Rs. 3.3 crore and the State government subsidy is Rs 50 lakh. Venture capital of Rs. 33 lakh (repayment starts after eight years and the amount is interest-free) has been provided by the Central government. We invested Rs. 75 lakh and the rest is loan from Canara bank. We are planning to supply cornflakes to the World Food Programme of the United Nations,” said Sollin Selvan.

Corn flakes manufacturing involves nine important steps: grinding the corn, mixing as per the formula, extrusion, flaking, drying, roasting, seasoning (flavouring), drying, packing, and storage. Machines such as grinder, pulveriser and corn-peeler were installed on Friday.

“Perambalur is a major producer of maize. Now most of the farmers sell them to poultry in Namakkal. Value addition to maize would improve their income.

Four lakh tonnes of maize are produced each year, and the crop is cultivated on 47,740 hectares of land,” Mr.Ahamed said. “We are planning to start units for value-addition to cotton and onion, other major crops of the district,” he added.

Sell sorghum soon after harvest, farmers told

The Agro Market Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre (AMI and BPC) of the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agri Business had advised farmers to sell sorghum upon harvest immediately as there was no chance of increase in its price in December.

In a price advisory, the AMI and BPC had indicated that the price of good quality small sorghum would rule around Rs. 20 to Rs. 21 a kg between October and November.

The price advisory was based on an analysis of the prices that had prevailed in the Tirupur regulated market for 11 years.

The analysis and survey was done by the back office of AMI and BPC in the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development Studies (CARDS), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, to provide market intelligence for farmers. Current price of good quality sorghum (*manjal cholam*, *karicholam*, and varieties) is Rs. 22 to Rs. 25 a kg and *vellai mottu cholam* is Rs. 30 and Rs. 35 a kg in Tirupur market. The poor quality of sorghum ruling around Rs. 19 to Rs. 20 a kg only in Tirupur market.

Sorghum grains with moisture content of less than 9 per cent and free of impurities are considered to be of good quality which fetches better price. The cost of cleaning charges would be Rs. 0.80 a kg. There would be less chance for price increase in December, the price advisory said. In Tamil Nadu, sorghum was cultivated for mainly grain and fodder purposes. The major sorghum growing districts are Dindigul, Coimbatore, Tiruchi, Salem, Karur, and Tirupur contributing 76 per cent of the area under cultivation.

The major varieties cultivated in the surroundings of Tirupur and Coimbatore districts are *manjal cholam* used as seed for good quality of fodder production, *vellai cholam*, *kari cholam*, and *karareddu cholam* are used for feed purposes and *mottu vellaicholam* are used as foodgrain.

In Tamil Nadu, sorghum is grown in kharif (July-October) and rabi (October-February) as well as in summer seasons. India is the top producer of sorghum. Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu, are the major sorghum-growing States.

AMI and BPC says the price of the produce likely to be low for some time

The department says prices are unlikely to improve even in December

“Market intelligence is crucial for farmers”



[The Hindu](#)

T.N. Balamohan, Dean, Horticulture College and Research Institute, Periyakulam, speaking at al seminar in Madurai. Photo: R. Ashok

Market intelligence is crucial for farmers to sustain in agriculture, said T.N. Balamurugan, Dean of Horticulture College and Research Institute, Periyakulam.

He was speaking at a district-level seminar on “Production and Value Addition of Horticulture Crops” attended by farmers at Tamil Nadu Agriculture College and Research Institute here recently. “Agriculture alone will not take farmers to the next level. Business-oriented agriculture should be promoted, without which making profit is not possible,” Dr. Balamurugan said.

According to him, farmers and traders should work together to cultivate products required in the market. Most of the farmers were unaware of the market demands and the needs of the consumers, he noted.

“Farmers should form associations and fix prices for their produces. Educating consumers and traders on quality addition is as important as educating farmers,” Dr. Balamurugan added.

C. Chinnusamy, Dean of Agriculture College and Research Institute, said despite lack of adequate rain in the past three years, India was able to retain a good position globally in export of vegetables, fruits and flowers because of advancement in technology and horticulture. He urged the farmers to make good use of technology in farming and determine fixed prices for their products in the market.

The programme was organised by National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation, Coimbatore, and Department of Horticulture, Madurai, under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture.

C. Moorthy, Deputy Director of Agriculture and Business Marketing, said, "Farmers cultivating Madurai Malli and pigeon peas are being formed into several groups containing 20 members, for whom loan and other assistance will be provided."

Suresh Dagade, Deputy Director of National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation, Coimbatore, said the institution had identified the horticultural needs of farmers and tried to bring out solutions.

Mettur inflow increases

A steady increase in the flow into the Mettur dam in the last two days has brought cheer to farmers and officials.

With good rains in the Cauvery catchments in Karnataka in the few days past, the dam has been getting more water since Saturday. The inflow, which stood at 6,852 cusecs on September 25, rose to 34,661 cusecs on Sunday. The level was 91.07 feet against the full reservoir level of 120 feet. About 18,600 cusecs was being discharged, sources in the Public Works Department said.

As there was no rainfall in the catchments and because of the poor storage level, water release for the Kuruvai crop season in the Cauvery Delta region was delayed by two months this year.

Turmeric cultivators want early commissioning of integrated complex



Despite turmeric being a notified commodity in Erode, farmers wonder why the officials are delaying shifting the activities of Regulated Market Committee to the Integrated Turmeric Complex.—
file Photo: M. GOVARTHAN

Turmeric cultivators in Erode district are unhappy with what they consider the reluctance of the officials for early commissioning of the Integrated Turmeric Complex at Karumandichellipalayam near Perundurai.

Despite turmeric being a notified commodity in the district, farmers wonder why the officials were delaying an order on shifting the activities of Regulated Market Committee to the complex that has been constructed at a cost of Rs. 19 crore.

The yellow spice was at present auctioned at four markets in the district known as the country's turmeric capital. On an average, the crop was cultivated on 10,000 acres in the district.

It was to unify the auctioning and ensure the right price for farmers that the Government had sanctioned the complex.

The newly constructed facility has an auction centre, godowns, buildings to house bank offices, and rooms for farmers.

The price of the commodity now rules at Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 7,000 per quintal. Farmers say anything less than Rs. 9,000 per quintal would not be remunerative.

An order from the Government was required to conduct the common auction at the complex, said P.K. Deivasigamani, national president of All India Turmeric Farmers' Association.

The present system of allowing a private auction centre to decide the price for the day was unacceptable, Mr. Deivasigamani said.

At the grievance redressal meeting recently, farmers expressed disgust over the functionaries of Regulated Market Committee taking an opinion poll of turmeric farmers with what they suspected an ulterior motive to prevent shifting of the trade activities to the new complex.

At a time when an official order has been issued for conducting online auction at the new complex has been issued, the opinion poll was tantamount to countering the government's plan of action to work for welfare of the cultivators, B.C. Sengottayan, Erode district unit secretary of Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam said.

Officials denied any reluctance on their part and assured the farmers that the opinion poll had no validity.

More hot air at climate summit

India must recapture its capacity to proactively provide both intellectual and political leadership on climate change



NO LONGER TABOO:China has started talking informally about when its emissions will peak, plateau for a while and then actually decline. File picture of a coal-fired power plant in Dadong, Shanxi province in China. —PHOTO: AP

The United Nations Climate Summit just concluded in New York. Such a conclave was taking place after a gap of five years. Expectations were low even though public rallies took place before the summit. The usual brave speeches were made but there were no dramatic announcements. U.S. President Barack Obama outlined the country's plans and programmes that are being driven entirely by executive action now and reiterated the goal of reducing U.S. emissions of greenhouse gases by 17 per cent below 2005 levels by 2020. The crux of the U.S.'s approach is to set and enforce carbon emission standards state-wise for power plants which contribute over a third of its emissions.

China's evolving stance

But it was China that everybody wanted to hear. Although represented only by its Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli, China did give further indications of its evolving stance on global climate change negotiations. The Vice Premier spoke of how renewable energy capacity as a proportion of electricity generating capacity has already reached 24 per cent in China (as compared to around 13 per cent in India) and how China is well on its way of reducing its emissions intensity (emissions per unit of GDP) by 40-45 per cent below 2005 levels by 2020 (as compared to the Indian target of a 20-25 per cent reduction). But the more interesting part of his speech was the statement that "China will take on international responsibilities that are commensurate with its national conditions." This is a significant nuancing of its traditional hardline position.

Actually, the Chinese have been giving enough signals over the past year and a half that they are looking at the climate change negotiations in a pragmatic manner, quite unlike India. This is because of two reasons. First, China is acutely conscious that it is now the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases that cause global warming. In 1990, China's share was 11 per cent, below that of the U.S. (22 per cent) and that of the European Union (19 per cent). Latest estimates are that China's share has zoomed to 29 per cent, while the U.S.'s share has fallen to 15 per cent; the European Union's to 11 per cent. In the same period, India's share incidentally has doubled to six per cent. The Chinese are more than aware that they are under global scrutiny. Second, environmental issues have come to dominate the public discourse as concerns on air and water pollution and chemical contamination have grown in the media and in the public as well.

Health-related effects of the deleterious environmental impacts of rapid economic growth have led Chinese authorities to demonstrate greater sensitivity. Civil society movements are carefully controlled by

the Chinese government but in the area of environment, the country has been very responsive — undoubtedly because of public worries and protests as well.

Last year, China and the U.S. agreed jointly that the phase down of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) should be negotiated under the Montreal Protocol. HFCs are substitutes for the ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) that are used largely in refrigerators and air conditioners but now their very powerful global warming potential and their rapid build-up in the greenhouse gas inventory has come into sharp public focus.

India and China have traditionally taken the view that HFCs should not be discussed under the Montreal Protocol which deals with ozone depletion, but under the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which deals with greenhouse gases. But the Chinese stance has clearly changed leaving India isolated, a position that is definitely not in our enlightened self-interest. An international agreement on the phase down (as different from a phase out) of HFCs under the highly successful Montreal Protocol could prevent a global average temperature increase of 0.5° Celsius and go a long way in reducing global warming.

India at the summit

China has also started talking informally about when its emissions will peak, plateau for a while and then actually decline. The subject was taboo till a few years back but now there is no reluctance on its part, unlike us, to engage in at least a conversation on the issue. There are different estimates worked out by Chinese think tanks but the consensus “peaking year” may fall between 2030-2035. After introducing seven regional pilot carbon markets last year, China also just announced plans to move to a national emissions trading system by 2016 that would be about twice the size of the present European system although it will, in the initial five years, cover around four per

cent of total emissions. With this, the Chinese have clearly sent a message that they are not against the use of market-friendly instruments to enforce environmental regulations and standards.

India's statement at the summit was functional. It contained the ritual laudatory genuflections to the Prime Minister but also highlighted some of the ongoing domestic actions that emanate from the 2008 National Action Plan on Climate Change. But it is not at all clear how these actions fit into the government's overall perspective on ecology and growth. With the formation of a committee to review, in just two months, the entire gamut of existing laws that protect and preserve our environment and forests, Mr. Modi's administration has clearly indicated where its preferences and priorities lie. Pressures to dilute standards have already started mounting. For instance, with great difficulty, mandatory fuel efficiency standards for passenger cars that have environmental impacts as well were finally notified in January 2014 to be effective from April 1, 2016. Already there is a move to postpone this date by a year. Nobody can be against time-bound clearances (and hopefully at times rejections as well) done in a transparent manner but this must not be at the cost of essential due diligence and pressing short term and long-term concerns that relate to health, livelihoods, pollution, climate change, etc. These are being ignored in the prevailing orthodoxy.

Flexibility

India must also begin to realise that while the BASIC quartet comprising Brazil, South Africa, India and China meets every quarter and issues a joint statement, increasingly the other three countries are showing flexibility. South Africa, for example, has put forward a new proposal to reflect equity in the architecture of the final climate change agreement. This is of vital interest to us but we have opposed the South African initiative. China has engaged the U.S. at multiple levels and could well end up having some sort of a bilateral agreement in the run-up to the December 2015 Conference in Paris

when it is hoped that an international agreement would finally become a reality. Negotiations are all about give and take, about working compromises, finding solutions. Clinging to old mantras when others are moving on in no way helps us. India must recapture its capacity to proactively provide both intellectual and political leadership as it did four-five years ago.

(Jairam Ramesh is a Rajya Sabha MP and former Union Minister.)

By forming a committee to review, in just two months, all the existing laws that protect our environment and forests, Mr. Modi's administration has clearly indicated where its priorities lie

Workshop educates youth on climate change policy

Students from across the country took part in a two-day workshop titled 'Agents of Change Programme' in Delhi University that ended on Sunday. Over 115 students participated in the programme that focused on the current policy on climate change at the national and international level.

The event was an initiative by the Indian Youth Climate Network with support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to empower the youth to have a stronger voice at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP) negotiations.

The young participants were trained to become future climate change leaders by making them understand policy and providing them with a platform to communicate regularly with the Indian parliamentarians to share their ideas, opinions and stance about climate policy in the months ahead of the COP 20.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Samba Ryots Stick to Tradition



NAGAPATTINAM: Ever tried traditional rice, the one that looks brownish-red? It may taste a bit different but it has immense health benefits. In fact, the biggest consumers of traditional rice breeds are private super specialty hospitals across major cities, which cater to dietary needs of patients, predominantly diabetics.

Besides health benefits, the breeds – Maapillai Samba, Kavuni, Garudan Samba, Thanga Samba and Samba Mosanam – are said to be drought-resistant and can also survive excessive rainfall. That works like an insurance cover, isn't it?

To cater to the growing demand, farmers here this year have expanded the acreage under traditional rice by about 600 acres. While the last season witnessed about 1,200 acres of traditional rice cultivation in Nagapattinam district, the figure would go up to 1,800 acres this Samba season.

Farmers say traditional paddy breeds do not seek high amounts of water, as they utilise moisture content in the air for growth.

According to Jayaraman, State coordinator of Save Our Rice campaign, “Thalainayar, Valivalam and Thirukuvazhai localities of Nagapattinam district have witnessed farmers opting for traditional paddy varieties. Since there is good demand for traditional rice such as Maapilai Samba, farmers are comfortable cultivating them.” About 20 kg of seeds are required per acre for traditional paddy cultivation for harvesting as much as 1,500 kg. Traditional rice fetches a market price of over Rs 62 per kg, which is decidedly more than the conventional rice you normally consume at home. It is the higher value for effort that draws farmers towards its cultivation.

Just as Maapilai Samba faces a huge demand from diabetics, the ‘Kavuni’ breed is supposed to fortify the immune system. “Super specialty hospitals at Chennai and Tiruchy are procuring traditional rice varieties from us. It is the hefty procurement prices that encourages other farmers to take up traditional paddy cultivation,” Jayaraman adds.

While cultivation cost for traditional paddy per acre is around Rs 6,000, it is about Rs 15,000 per acre for conventional paddy such as CR-1009 and other ADT paddy varieties. Traditional crops also keep weeds in check, as they grow taller than weeds, thus depriving them of sunlight.

As many as 63 traditional varieties, including Poonkar, Maapillai Samba, Kavuni and Thengapoo Samba are cultivated in the delta districts. Farmers say they get seeds for traditional paddy through links with their counterparts across the delta districts.

Agricultural Research Station to Solve Shortage of Quality Planting Materials



Newly developed varieties of ginger, turmeric and tapioca crops

THRISSUR: To solve the non-availability of quality planting materials of ginger, turmeric and tapioca crops, especially for the newly developed varieties, the Agricultural Research Station (ARS), Mannuthy, of Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) has come out with production and supply of ready-to-plant plantlets of ginger and turmeric and rooted single nod cuttings of tapioca (cassava).

These plantlets are produced by a mass multiplication technique for large-scale production of planting materials of crops like tapioca, ginger and turmeric.

This method helps derive more plantlets from rhizomes, considerably reducing the quantity of rhizomes required for planting and also lead to uniform maturing of the crop.

In the traditional multiplication method, cut pieces of rhizomes are used for making plantlets of ginger and turmeric while multiple noded cuttings are used for generating tapioca plantlets. In the case of ginger and turmeric, farmers require an average of six to eight kg of seed material for planting in one cent (40 sq m) under traditional method.

Under the mass multiplication method, an average of 500 plants is obtained from one kg of seed material. In case of tapioca, 50-60 rooted cuttings can be prepared from a 3m-long cassava stem which is 5-6 times more than the output of traditional method, U Jayakumaran, Head of the ARS, said.

In the mass multiplication method, rhizomes are cut into single node pieces, soaked in a mixture of insecticide and fungicide solution for 10-15 minutes and planted in portrays filled with good quality coir pith compost. The trays are kept in propagating structures covered with UV stabilised polythene sheet.

Irrigation is required only when the media is dry. The rhizome pieces germinate within two weeks and good mass of roots are observed within a period of three weeks.

First Pellet Feed Mill for Broilers Launched in Mala

THRISSUR: Access to low cost pellet feed for broilers, has become a reality for people in the state with the launch of the first pellet feed mill for broilers at Mala near here.

According to T N Prathapan MLA, the pellet feed mill set up by the Kerala State Poultry Development Corporation (KEPCO) at Kuzhoor in Mala is the first such government initiative in the public sector of the country.

The project funded to the tune of Rs 15.55 crore by the state government has come to fruition after two decades' endeavour.

It was former Chief Minister K Karunakaran who laid the foundation stone for the state's first pellet feed manufacturing factory in his assembly constituency of Mala at an estimated cost of Rs 2.17 crore way back in 1993.

However, the project witnessed significant delay and time and cost escalation over the period.

The plant that was initially estimated to cost of Rs 2.17 crore if completed in time, is now constructed at a cost of 15.55 crore.

The plant now provides jobs to as many as 90 unskilled workers and indirect job opportunities to around 300 people in the area, said Prathapan.

Similarly for cassava, mass multiplication is achieved by using stem cuttings having single buds and planting these cuttings in portrays with 5cm cavity size. The other preparatory steps are similar to that of ginger and turmeric.

The plantlets get ready for planting within a month. Mass multiplied plantlets can be kept in portrays for a maximum of 6-8 weeks with sufficient fertigation, Sreelatha M U, scientist at the ARS, said.

Agricultural Research Station, Mannuthy, will provide rooted plantlets of tapioca, ginger and turmeric based on the demand from the public, KAU officials said.

'Ban Import of Natural Rubber'

KOCHI: INFAM (Indian Farmers Movement) has approached the Union Government demanding a total ban on import of natural rubber. A delegation comprising retired IAS officer P C Cyriac, V C Sebastian, M C George, former MLA P C Joseph and Moydeen Haji led by Bishop Mar Mathew Arakkal met Union Minister of State for Commerce Nirmala Sitharaman and submitted a memorandum urging the government to ban import of natural rubber. "If allowed, restrict the volume of import to the actual extent of deficit of production," the memorandum stated.

"The Rubber Board's statistics reveals that there is a shortage of 50,000 to 60,000 metric tonnes of natural rubber (NR) production in India as against the industrial requirement of the nation. At the same

time, the price of NR has crashed down by one third compared with the price in 2012,” it stated.

“Ninety per cent of the country’s NR production is from Kerala. Of this, 85 per cent NR is produced by marginal medium and small farmers and the extent of land owned by them varying from 10 cents to 2 hectares. About 12 lakh families directly depend on rubber cultivation for their daily bread. Another six lakh labourers and their families also are directly employed in this farm sector,” INFAM leaders said. INFAM has sought immediate government action to refix the minimum price of RSS 4 rubber at Rs 180 per kg, considering the escalation of cost in production.

The farmers organisation, in the memorandum, has also urged the authorities to formulate a national policy for road rubberisation scheme at least for National Highways to increase domestic consumption of natural rubber.

Another demand is to increase import duty to 40 per cent of the price and to restrict import through one or two ports and implement strict quality check and make sure that rubber below the RSS 4 quality is not imported to India. “Natural rubber import should be restricted as requirement specific, certified by the Rubber Board rather than distorting the price structure or manipulation of the domestic market for undue gain,” INFAM demanded. INFAM urged the government to instruct the Rubber Board to procure at least 1 lakh TEU rubber at Rs 180 per kg as an immediate arrangement for saving the distressed rubber farmers.

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Rain: 0
Humidity: 79
Wind: normal

Tomorrow's Forecast

Monday, Sep 29

Max 32° | Min 26°
Cloudy

Sunrise: 05:58
Sunset: 06:00
Barometer: 1013

Tuesday, Sep 30

Max 33° | Min 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday
Oct 1



34° | 26°
Cloudy

Thursday
Oct 2



35° | 26°
Sunny

Friday
Oct 3



35° | 26°
Sunny

Saturday
Oct 4



35° | 26°
Sunny

Sunday
Oct 5



36° | 26°
Sunny

DECCAN Chronicle

High-fibre rice developed



High-fibre rice which has reached the shelves of supermarkets in the city (Photo: DC)

Chennai: A city-based research foundation has applied for a patent for its high-fibre rice that slows down the rise of blood sugar levels after a meal.

When tested for fibre, this rice variety (*oryza sativa*) has five times higher dietary fibre even in its polished form compared to regular white rice, said well-known diabetologist and chairman of Dr Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre Dr V. Mohan.

'Dr Mohan's High Fibre Rice' was developed by a conventional plant breeding method, called mutation breeding, and launched in 2013. Out of 2,250 varieties released globally, 305 were developed in India.

Sudha Vasudevan, senior scientist and head of Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, said, “We conducted a pilot study, comparing the glycemic profile of a newly-developed high fibre rice and normal white rice in Asian Indians and concluded that replacing normal white rice with high fibre rice may help to reduce the glycemic response among overweight Asian Indians who are at a higher risk for type 2 diabetes.” Diabetologists in the city say that the more you polish, less the fibre content.

“There are many varieties available in the market and any rice that has high fibre content will lower blood sugar level,” said Dr P. Dharmarajan, director of Institute of Diabetology at Rajiv Gandhi government general hospital. Hand-milled rice has all the fibre and retains important ingredients, says diabetologist, Dr R. Sundararaman of SRM Institute of Medical Science (SIMS).

Eco friendly Kolu from recycled stuff a hit



Indrani Swaminathan, a retired crafts teacher, makes dolls from junk (Photo: DC)

Chennai: This Navarathri season, there is more to celebrate than just the religious side. Ms Indrani Swaminathan (74) has not just resorted to follow the traditional sundal and concert in her kolu but to include idols made from junk in her kolu steps.

This junk includes recycled waste from plastic, cotton and anything used and she leaves no stone unturned by putting her products on sale too. The ethnic chain of leaves used as a welcome sign at the threshold, made out of tea cups, used mouthwash bottles turned into flower vases, dolls from mosquito coils are some of the magic touches that her wrinkled and strong hands have yielded.

Gathering used materials from friends and relatives, she buys additional requirements to make the idols from NGOs and waste paper marts. In a week-long sale for this festival, she has made around Rs 15,000 from the proceeds of her products.

“I have been doing this as a hobby since the last Kolu and it pays. At a retired age, when my children are settled, it gives me satisfaction to be productive both in the house as well as monetarily,” said Ms Indrani, swelling with pride at doing her bit for the environment and simultaneously earning through it after retiring as a crafts teacher from a private school.

“Students from arts colleges also have taken my products to put up stalls and I’m happy that it is doing well in the market, considering that they are almost out of stock,” she added. Her affordable recycled products that range from Rs 10 to Rs 100 are on limited availability at her house in Kotturpuram. She can be contacted at 9940146233.

Brown rice can help diabetics: Doctor



Chennai: A randomised, controlled trial on the effect of brown rice, white rice and brown rice with legumes on blood glucose and insulin responses in overweight Asian Indians has found that consumption of brown rice in place of white rice can help reduce 24-h glucose and fasting insulin responses among overweight Asian Indians.

Fifteen volunteers of 25-45 years of age volunteered and they allocated to the possible ordering of the brown rice, white rice and brown rice with legumes diet in a randomised crossover design. The study, published in *Diabetes Technology and Therapeutics* this year, suggested that improving the quality of the cereal staple in the diet by substituting brown rice for white rice and reducing the overall dietary GL (glycemic load) may offer substantial health benefits.

Diabetologists say south Indians are so used to consuming white rice and since brown rice takes longer cooking time and hard to chew, white rice is mostly preferred. More the white means more polishing. “Earlier, there were no mills and only in the late ‘60s and ‘70s polishing rice started. Refining or polishing of rice decreases dietary fibre and other health beneficial nutrients and are easily digestible in the body.

Quicker the digestion of rice, it will lead to quick rise in blood sugar. Studies from our centre had shown that intake of white rice is strongly associated with type 2 diabetes in India. Higher intake of refined grains predominantly white rice was also associated with insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome in the south Indian population,” explained diabetologist, Dr Mohan.

A recent Consumer Acceptance and Preference Study (CAPS) on brown and undermilled Indian rice varieties in Chennai, published in the Journal of the American College of Nutrition finds that most consumers preferred polished white rice. It was concluded in the study that cooking quality and appearance of the grains were perceived as the most important factors to consider when purchasing rice among Chennai urban adults.

Dr C.R. Anand Moses, former head of department of diabetology, RGGGH, said brown rice contains more fibre and sugar will rise slowly after consuming it. “We need at least 30-40 gm of fibre a day and unless we add vegetables we end up consuming very less fibre. We should include more vegetables in our diet,” he said.