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# THE HINDU

## **As tur prices touch Rs. 150 a kg., government presses panic button**

*The crisis appears to be more in the availability of tur and urad dals as total pulses production dipped to 17.2 million tonnes last year as against 19.25 million tonnes in the previous year.*



The Centre on Wednesday convened an emergency meeting of top ranking officials led by the Department of Consumer Affairs to consider measures to arrest the spiralling prices of tur (arhar) and urad dals that form an essential part of menu in almost every household in the country. Tur is selling between Rs.80 and Rs.150 a kilogram in retail markets in north India while urad hovers around Rs.120 a kg in Delhi markets.

Struggling with a shortfall in supplies following a 10 per cent decline in pulses production last year, the government has decided to import another 2,000 tonnes of tur dal, in addition to 3,250 tonnes that has already arrived at various ports. Fresh stocks of domestic tur will arrive towards the end of the year.

With the festival season round the corner, the government decided to sell imported tur dal from its Safal and Kendriya Bhandar outlets.

The crisis appears to be more in the availability of tur and urad dals as total pulses production dipped to 17.2 million tonnes last year against 19.25 million tonnes in the previous year. Normally India imports up to 3.5 million tonnes of pulses to augment supplies but this year it is looking for another two million tonnes from Myanmar, Malawi and Mozambique.

The problem is that these sources have almost exhausted the surpluses that they can export as they also suffered shortfalls in production last year due to similar weather conditions that affected India.

The Kendriya Bhandar will lift tur dal from MMTC at Mumbai and supply at its 100 locations in Delhi, while Safal will sell the dal through its 300 outlets. This will augment availability and help contain prices in parts of north India.

So far 3,250 tonnes of imported tur dal has arrived at Chennai and Mumbai ports while another tranche is expected to land soon. For now, the MMTC (Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation) has enough stocks to supply in Delhi and neighbouring states, sources said.

The MMTC will import an additional quantity of 2,000 tonnes of tur dal to augment supplies and moderate prices of pulses, official sources said.

The government drew comfort from the first advance estimates of kharif production that showed pulses output at 5.56 million tonnes, which is slightly higher than the production in the corresponding period last year.

The Centre is keeping its fingers crossed for kharif pulses output to match at least last year's levels. Apart from that there is optimism about pulses sowing having exceeded last year's levels in kharif due to higher MSP announced by the government.

## Paddy area shrinking in delta districts, says study



*Study by expert group attributes it to climate change impact*

A recent study on the climate change and its impact in the Cauvery delta districts of Tamil Nadu reveals a disturbing trend of shrinking paddy coverage, loss of kuruvai as a season, samba crop at the mercy of monsoon and importantly agricultural concerns turning more intense than ever before. Shocked at the findings, agriculture activists have called for the launch of a “Save Delta Movement”.

| <b>DANGERS IN DELTA</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| ● Alternative crops such as cotton, pulses, sugarcane gaining preference | ● Climate change causing loss of soil fertility, flooding, and drought |
| ● In many places, groundwater turns brackish beyond 150 feet             | ● Loss of Kuruvai crop has become a regular phenomenon                 |
| ● Samba crop is a big gamble in places not dependent on groundwater      |  |

This comes out in the study “Combating Climate Change: Vulnerability of Cauvery Delta, Food Security and Livelihood Resilience” by Prof. S. Janakarajan of the Madras Institute of Development Studies and covers Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, and a part of Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu and Karaikal region of Puducherry Union Territory. The

project, funded by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi, commenced 20 months ago and is scheduled for completion by December 2016.

Sharing the findings of his research with *The Hindu* during a mid-term review and shared learning dialogue workshop here on Tuesday, Prof. Janakarajan pointed out that the area under paddy in the delta had shrunk alarmingly even as kuruvai as a paddy season was under threat. Samba was now the only cropping season in areas that did not depend on groundwater for irrigation and that exposed it to the vagaries of nature leaving samba paddy at the mercy of the monsoon depending on the water release from upstream.

On the other hand crops such as cotton, pulses, sugarcane, banana, and vegetables have made significant inroads into the delta crop culture at the expense of paddy.

On the human resources, Prof. Janakarajan says that technology has helped farmers overcome labour scarcity especially during peak manpower demand season but that is the only silver lining in an otherwise gloomy situation. Storage and marketing facilities are unscientific while industrial and domestic pollution levels have risen high impacting agricultural prospects, the research reveals.

While agriculture in the tail-end areas have become a gamble because of salinity, flooding, scarcity of water, and so on, the overall head and tail-end area concerns have become more intense now in the past quarter of a century, Prof. Janakarajan says.

The trends can be attributed to climate change impact and call for immediate and sustainable corrective measures.

Prof. Janakarajan and his team made specific in-depth field work in four typologically unique villages in Voimedu in Nagappatinam district where salinity and seawater flooding affected even one cropping,

Raghunathapuram in Tiruvarur district where two or even three cropping are achieved with abundant groundwater potential, Kandamangalam where one crop was achieved while the second was a gamble as groundwater turns brackish beyond 150 feet and Budalur in Thanjavur district which, situated between two rivers, is entirely dependant on surface water but where only brackish water is available up to 45 feet beyond which hard indigenous rock blocks further access.

Speaking at the workshop, Tamil Cauvery Delta Farmers' Welfare Association general secretary Mannargudi S. Ranganathan along with the Communist Party of India (Marxist) Central Committee member and MLA S. Balakrishnan said the findings prophesied a grim future for the delta and agreed that it called for a "Save Delta Movement".

They said delta districts contributed a substantial portion of the State's foodgrains requirement and any threat to the cropping pattern would destabilise the food security besides affecting the livelihood resources of the thousands of farmers and farm workers.

### **90,000 hectares to be brought under 'samba' cultivation**

Mechanical transplanting of nurseries being taken up in Pudukottai.

An extent of 90,000 hectares will be brought under 'samba' cultivation during the current season and the Agriculture Department officials have taken steps for supplying seedlings, fertiliser and other inputs to farmers without delay.

Avudaiyarkovil and Manamelkudi are the major taluks in the district accounting for a vast area under samba cultivation.

The recent spell of rain had encouraged the farmers to transplant the nurseries but scarcity of farm labourers has been a challenge to them. To tide over the problem, the department has been popularising mechanisation of transplanting of nurseries particularly in and around Nakudi.

It not only minimises labour requirement but also increases productivity, says D. Chandrasekaran, Joint Director of Agriculture.

Out of 90,000 hectares under 'samba' cultivation, about 60,000 hectares would be covered under transplanting technique. The department released back-end subsidy of Rs, 3,000 a hectare under the National Agriculture Development Programme and National Food Mission.



There was good response from farmers to mechanical transplanting.

About 152 hectares had been covered so far under the mechanical transplanting and about 60,000 of area would be covered. "It involved minimum or nil wastage of seedlings," he said. The department was organising awareness campaign in villages for the benefit of farmers.

Collector S. Ganesh inspected the mechanised planting of nurseries at Keezha Panaiyur near Arimalam on Wednesday. Farmers said that the rain had come as a blessing for them.

Parts of the district experienced sharp showers on Tuesday. For the 24 hours ended at 8-30 a.m. on Wednesday, Alangudi recorded a maximum of 74 mm of rain, Aranthangi 59, Tirumayam 50.20, Arimalam 48.20, Ponnamaravathy

36.20, Pudukottai 34, Karaiyur 33.90, Keezhanilai 25, Kudumiyanmalai 14 and Annavasal 13 mm.

### **Full of hopes, farmers begin sowing rabi crops**

Santosh Chavan and his family members sowing bengal gram in their field at Sannur village of Chitapur taluk in Kalaburagi district.— PHOTO: ARUN KULKARNI

*Bengal gram and sunflower among the first to be planted*



Although deficient rainfall continued to haunt Kalaburagi district, farmers who suffered heavy losses during the kharif season have begun brisk sowing of rabi crops, particularly Bengal gram and sunflower, throughout the district.

Officials in the Agriculture Department told *The Hindu* here on Wednesday that the shortfall of rains during September was 30 per cent, but that in the first week of October was only 10 per cent. The rains at the beginning of this month had helped loosening the soil, thereby enabling farmers to begin preparations towards sowing the crops.

### **17 per cent covered**

As per official figures, sowing has been completed in 17 per cent of the total rabi area of just over 5.08 lakh hectares. The highest sowing of 35 per cent has been reported from Sedam and Aland taluks, and the lowest sowing of just one per cent has been reported in Jewargi taluk. While Afsalpur

recorded 26 per cent sowing, Kalaburgi taluk reported 13 per cent sowing, and Chincholi and Chitapur reported six and two per cent sowing respectively.

The original target fixed for the rabi season this year was 4.83 lakh hectares; this was revised by the government to 5.08 lakh hectares taking into consideration the transfer of unsown area of kharif season. Out of the total area of 87,742 hectares sown so far under the rabi season, 64,295 hectares is covered by Bengal gram and 22,465 hectares is covered by sunflower.

The target fixed by the government for Bengal gram coverage this year is 2.06 lakh hectares and for sunflower it is 27,367 hectares. The area under sunflower is likely to cross the fixed target this year.

One of the most disturbing factors was the low percentage of sowing of jowar, which is the staple rabi crop of the district.

As against the target of 2.49 lakh hectares, the sowing of jowar has been completed only in 472 hectares.

“There is still enough time to complete sowing jowar and other crops, and we have not lost of hope of farmers achieving the targets fixed for the rabi season,” an official said.

Rainfall in the month of September had revived the hopes of farmers of reaping at least something from the standing red gram crop in Chincholi, Chitapur and Sedam.

However, the growth of red gram crop in other taluks including Aland, Afsalpur, Jewargi and Kalaburagi is stunted.

### **‘Pesticide is not a panacea but placebo’**

*Experts stress an integrated approach involving botanical pesticides and bio-control agents*



## PERILS OF MADURAI CROPS

Focus of scientists at Agricultural College and Research Institute is on some of the notorious pests that affect crops in Madurai region. A safe management, which involves ecological pest management, is encouraged among farmers.



➤ Rice gall midge or 'Aanaikomban' is a major menace in paddy. Madurai is considered the hot spot in the world for this pest. A parasite, *Platygaster oryzae*, is used to counter the attack of Rice gall midge.

➤ Mealy bug or 'kallu/maavu poochi' affects both agricultural and horticultural crops in the region. It particularly hits tuberose. Natural enemies of the pest are studied for application in farm.

➤ Vegetable crops are hit by spider mite. Integrated pest management strategies, using new molecules, are being developed to combat spider mite.

➤ 'Madurai Malli' is affected by bud worm. The ACRI identifies botanical pesticides to overcome bud worm attack.



With growing awareness of healthy foods and neighbouring Kerala turning cautious over presence of insecticide residues in vegetables transported from Tamil Nadu, the Agricultural College and Research Institute (ACRI) here is advocating safe pest management techniques to ensure quality, quantity and safety for farmers and users.

About 60 per cent of plant protection is still managed by nature, says M. Kalyanasundaram, Head, Department of Agricultural Entomology, ACRI.

He is concerned about overemphasis on use of chemical pesticides and insecticides. "The popular belief is that pesticide or insecticide is the panacea for all crop diseases. It is not true. It is only a tool, or rather placebo. It does not cure the disease but may aggravate it," he says.

As consumer awareness is high, people should be supplied with foods that ensure their safety. Hence, farmers should adopt safer pest management techniques. V. Antonisamy, a farmer in Puliyangudi of Tirunelveli district, does not apply any pesticide for mealy bug or ‘maavu poochi’ found in his sugarcane farm. There are native, natural enemies to pests, which act as predators or parasites. The ACRI encourages farmers to use botanical pesticides.

“Only one per cent of the pesticide targets the organism. The rest go into the environment. Who will pay for it,” poses Dr. Kalyanasundaram. He advocates an integrated approach involving botanical pesticides and bio-control agents. Wherever the harvest frequency is less, as in the case of vegetables like brinjal and bhendi, farmers should go for bio-pesticides as chemical pesticides would not work on the pests. A pest with a normal incubation period of 15 days will not be affected by a pesticide sprayed for two days. This will also result in higher presence of pesticide residue.

*Agricultural College and Research Institute advocates safe pest management techniques to ensure quality, quantity and safety for farmers and users*

### **Agriculture fest in Brahmavar from Friday**

The Zonal Agricultural and Horticultural Research Station (ZAHRS), affiliated to the University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, Shivamogga, will be organising a one-day ‘Kshetrosava’ and awareness programme on agriculture at Brahmavar in Udupi district on October 9.

The programme was being sponsored by the Directorate of Cashew and Cocoa Development (Kochi), Canara Bank, Syndicate Bank, Corporation Bank, Karnataka Bank and Vijaya Rural Development Foundation (Mangaluru).

In a press release issued here on Wednesday, M. Hanumanthappa, Associate Director of Research, ZAHRS, Brahmavar, said that the main objective of

this programme is to transfer the latest agricultural technologies through demonstrations, discussions, field visits at the ZAHRS through seminars. .

### **Provide scientific price for crops: farmer**

Puttaiah, progressive farmer, who has been chosen to inaugurate Dasara celebrations this year, said that if government assures scientific prices for agriculture crops and provides continuous power supply, the condition of farmers will improve.

Participating at an interactive session with members of the Mysuru Zilla Panchayat here on Wednesday, Mr. Puttaiah said that there was no other occupation which would be as remunerative as agriculture if the facilities were given to farmers.

He said that the prices of all commodities had gone up and the manufacturers of all the commodities were reaping the fruits of the hike while the farmers were deprived of a remunerative price though the cost of cultivation had gone up considerably in the recent years.

He urged the government to form a committee to work out a price based on the cost of inputs including labour.

Then the government must ensure that the farmers get the stipulated price for their commodities, he said, adding that this would prevent farmers from exploitation.

Similarly three to four hours of three-phase power supply was being given to rural places, he said and added that farmers were unable to operate IP sets to feed water to the crops owing to erratic power supply.

Mr. Puttaiah called upon fellow farmers not to get into the debt trap and also advised them not to indulge in any bad habits.

He also asked them not to spend huge amount of money on marriages or birthdays and advised them to hold such events with the money which they could offer to spend.

“Not even think of borrowing money from any financial institution for marriages or other functions,” he said.

“I had just four acres of lands and I struggled a lot to come up in life.” He said that he earned Rs. 30 lakh annually and spent over Rs. 20 lakh annually. “It is with the savings that enabled me to buy a tractor, tiller apart from digging over eight borewells,” he said.

All 40 members of my undivided family are engaged in agriculture and allied activities and though 10 of them had got degree in various disciplines, they did not opt for government jobs and they have been engaged in agriculture, he said.

***Puttaiah, progressive farmer, has been chosen to inaugurate Dasara celebrations this year***

### **Coffee table book planned on Amaravati**

Chairman of the Cultural Centre of Vijayawada (CCV) Y. Harishchandra Prasad has proposed to bring out a coffee table book on Amaravati, the new capital city of Andhra Pradesh.

The first part of the coffee table book will speak about the history of Amaravati region including that of Dhanyakataka-Dharanikota and Amaravati in historical evolution with illustrations.

Part-II will include the current scenario of the region showcasing the town and countryside, the vernacular and colonial architecture, the cultural fabric, fairs and festivals, folk dance and music, professional groups like potters, weavers, toddy-tappers etc, the green agricultural fields, the cropping pattern, the lifestyle of people, establishment of CRDA (Capital Region Development Authority), land pooling and bhoomi puja for new capital

region at Mandadam village by the Chief Minister and handing over of the master plan for new capital region by the Singapore government.

Part-III will have details of the master plan, zoning, sectors, core capital region, government buildings and what the future holds for Amaravati.

A committee has been constituted with the Director, Archaeology, Director-Culture, a representative of Commissioner I and PR Department, Director-Publication, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur, secretary of Krishna District Writers' Association G. V. Poornachand and Director-Planning as its members.

The Commissioner has asked the members to put forth their suggestions in the next three days.

### **Call for proper pricing of sugar**

Sugarcane farmers in the district are sceptical about any benefit arising out of Central Government's recent increase in duty on import of sugar from 25 per cent to 40 per cent and abolition of Duty Free Import Authorisation Scheme.

According to representatives of farmers' organisations, there must be a combination of measures to extricate sugar industry out of the present crisis. Proper pricing of sugar for domestic consumption is a vital measure.

According to Subi Thalpathi, representative of Thadapalli-Arakankottai Ayacut Farmers' Association, there is a knee-jerk reaction whenever the price of sugar is increased by just one or two rupees per kg..

But, none realises that the common man does not suffer since the family consumption does not exceed two to three kg. per month.

Confectionaries and soft drinks manufacturers are the silent beneficiaries of the sugar crisis, and the Central Government is quite aware of the situation, farmers lament.

According to Senniappan, representative of sugar cane cultivators, the State Government must come forward to at least make prompt payments for the power sourced from cogeneration plants operated by the sugar mills.

The main demand of the cultivators at this juncture is for making ethanol production remunerative.

As per official statistics, supply of ethanol has risen to 83 crore litres from 32 crore litres last year, after the sourcing price was fixed at Rs. 48.50 to Rs. 49.50 per litre.

### **Waiver**

The Central Government has announced waiver of excise duties on ethanol for the ensuing sugar season 2015-16, alongside scaling up the blending (with petrol) target from 5 per cent to 10 per cent to improve liquidity in the industry, and enable mills to clear cane price arrears.

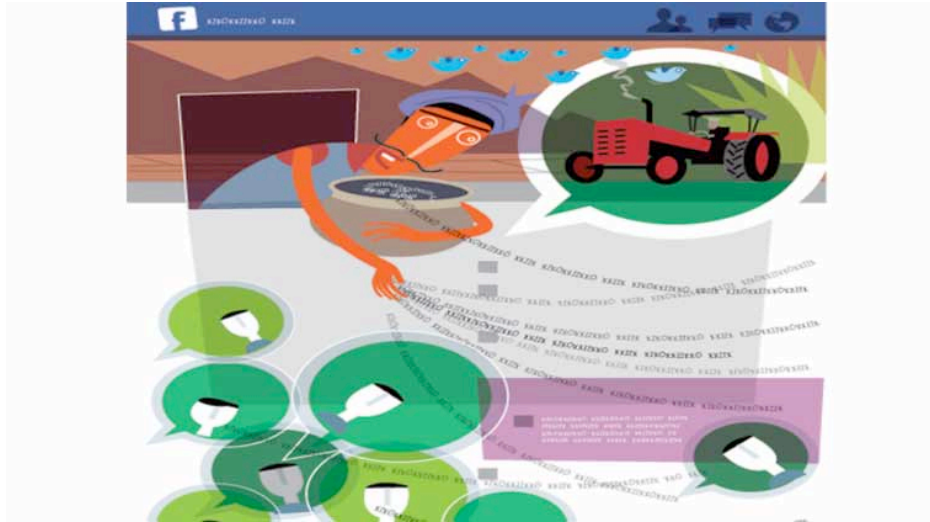
### **Training for dairy farmers**

Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University conducted a three-day training for dairy farmers on its Bidar campus. S.M. Shivaprakash, Director, Extension, inaugurated the camp on Tuesday. Dean B.V. Shivaprakash was present. Around 100 farmers participated in the workshop.



### **Agrarian crisis & social media: Bringing farmers together**

Farmers are increasingly relying on mutual assistance, through social media and instant messaging.



In a state caught in an agrarian crisis — made worse by bouts of drought, unseasonal rains and hailstorms — farmers today are increasingly relying more on mutual assistance, including through social media and instant messaging.

Balaji Patil mainly grows soyabean, harbara (chickpea) and sugarcane on his 30-acre holding. This time, for a change, the 28-year-old farmer from Delub village in Ardhapur taluka of Maharashtra's Nanded district experimented with bananas on a 3-acre patch, only to see his plantation starting to rot. He, then, found — from fellow farmers — that it was caused by the parasitic nematode, a roundworm infecting the root tissue of the banana plant. At the end of it, Patil managed to produce a ripe crop, thanks to the collective expertise of farmers from across Maharashtra that enabled him to successfully rid his plant of the parasite.

“The roundworms had me worried, though I knew it was a common problem that farmers face in western Maharashtra (Nanded is on the eastern Marathwada side). I just had to send one message and got several options for the most effective chemical treatment,” notes Patil, who began cultivating his ancestral land seven years ago after completing a bachelor's degree in arts.

In a state caught in an agrarian crisis — made worse by bouts of drought, unseasonal rains and hailstorms — farmers today are increasingly relying more on mutual assistance, including through social media and instant messaging.

One such initiative is ‘Baliraja’, a WhatsApp group formed by Anil Bandawane, a farmer from Junnar near Pune and an engineer by qualification.

“I came across WhatsApp groups of political parties and other organisations. That’s when it struck me that since a large number of farmers in Maharashtra use WhatsApp, why not have our own group to give guidance to each other? I, therefore, created this group on January 1 this year,” says Bandawane.

Baliraja is a name commonly used for farmers in Maharashtra.

The 27-year old first floated his idea late last year on a [Facebook](#) page, of which he was part. He gathered the contact numbers of a few interested farmers, and started the WhatsApp group with 25-30 members. Within ten months, it had swelled to over a thousand.

Given the limitations on the number of members a group could accommodate — and, at the same time, the growing interest — Bandawane opted to create multiple Baliraja verticals. There are already eleven such groups, each focusing on a particular region (western Maharashtra, Vidarbha, etc) or crop (say, grapes and pomegranates in Nasik). A twelfth one, dedicated to animal husbandry and dairying, is currently in the works.

Apart from farmers, Bandawane has also co-opted agriculture experts and government officials to disseminate information about various schemes and respond to complaints. If these weren’t enough, the WhatsApp groups even have counselors, poets and writers to boost the spirits of farmers in a state witness to a spurt in suicides by ryots in recent times.

About two months ago, Bandawane also started a Baliraja group for farmers from outside Maharashtra, who couldn’t join any of the existing groups since the conversation was in Marathi. The new Hindi-based group has so far drawn over 60 members from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and even Manipur.

Abhijeet Bhoir, a 25-year-old engineer based in Bhiwandi, a satellite town of Mumbai, has been helping his aunt to enhance production on her one-acre land in Shahapur near Thane. He is a recent entrant to Baliraja: “Being new to this field, I am finding the group to be really of help in knowing about the



market conditions for different crops, soil and water management in pomegranates or the best method to make manure at home.”

Amol Sainwar, chairman of the Pune-based Shivprabha Charitable Trust, believes that the impact of instant messaging services such as Baliraja goes beyond the immediate members. “Although this group has just about 1,100 members, its reach is much wider, as farmers use it to flag off the problems of fellow non-member villagers too,” he explains.

Farmers, he observes, are often reticent to talk about monetary issues or their mental state of mind on a public forum. “But organisations such as ours have 15-20 nodal volunteers on the Baliraja group, who are in touch with farmers in and around their villages. They sound off others on the platform about such people in need of help,” adds Sainwar.

He illustrates the case of Dadarao Shinde, a small farmer from Sheni village in Ardhapur taluka, whose son Prathamesh has been a diabetic since birth. The four-year-old is now insulin-dependent, so much so that his treatment costs Shinde about Rs 4,500 per month. “Shinde was reaping very poor harvests for the past few years. A volunteer informed others on the Baliraja group about the problem and we arranged for an aid of Rs 2,500 for the family every month,” informs Sainwar.

43-year-old Vilas Tathod, who is from Talegaon Dawala village in Telhara taluka of Akola district, has been a member of Baliraja ever since it was founded. According to him, many members may not explicitly talk about their problems, but what the group does is to make even these men “feel there is someone out there for them”.

Tathod recounts a recent incident of a farmer, whom he just knew by his WhatsApp display name: “This man called me late in the night, saying he was in massive debts and was contemplating suicide. I spoke to him for a long time, calmed him down, and made him rethink his decision.”

That’s what social media is perhaps capable to doing — in a society of increasingly atomistic individuals and where traditional community ties are weakening.

## 5 simple ways to eat quinoa and stay healthy

Looking to eat healthy, or even for a high-protein diet? Here are five ways to include more quinoa into your everyday diet.



Try out quinoa in salads or as a substitute

Consume quinoa, a full of protein, nutritious, easy to digest and gluten-free food item, either plain or as an ingredient in a grain salad.

Executive chef Vijayant Rawat of Mosaic Hotels shares five easy ways to include more quinoa into your everyday diet:

### **1. Just plain:**

Quinoa has a lovely nutty flavor, and it can boil in less than 20 minutes, so it's a great alternative to pasta or rice for a quick meal. Use quinoa just as you would any other grain, like rice or barley. It makes a fantastic side dish for almost any meal, especially if cooked it with broth instead of water and add a bay leaf to the pot. It can also be used in breakfast porridges, and salads.

### **2. Stuffed into vegetables:**

Quinoa makes a great stuffing. We can enjoy quinoa and mushroom stuffed with zucchini. Grilled zucchini is usually assigned the lesser role of a side dish, adding a hearty grain stuffing raises it to a main course. For the filling, quinoa is cooked in a mixture of cashews, garlic, and seasonings that are mix

together until thick and creamy, and then the whole thing is stuffed into hollowed-out zucchini. Serve with a vegetable salad for a healthy and enjoyable meal.

### **3. Substituted for another grain:**

It has a similar texture when cooked to other superior and fluffy grains like bulgur wheat. So it's great substituted in dishes that call for bulgur, like in this quinoa tabbouleh. Quinoa is first toasted to deepen its flavor, then cooked by the absorption method and combined with herbs and vegetables. This dish can be finished by drizzling a tablespoon of good-quality, strongly flavoured olive oil on top just prior to serving. White quinoa is the most common variety, but red quinoa is also available and has a nuttier taste. They can be used interchangeably.

### **4. In a grain salad:**

Quinoa is a fabulous base for easy, quick, filling grain salads. Use quinoa as the basis for a light, whole-grain salad. Toss cooled quinoa with lightly diced tomato and cucumber, minced parsley, olive oil and a bit of lemon juice for a refreshing warm-weather side dish.

One of our favorites is this Organic Chicken quinoa salad. Combine it with a mixture of organic garlic clove, organic chicken breasts, parmesan cheese, thinly chopped red onion, tomato, unsalted butter, and avocado and mix warm quinoa and a bit of organic lime juice. Cook on low heat and once cooked remove it.

### **5. For breakfast:**

Quinoa's high protein content and fast cooking time makes it an immense breakfast. Boil quinoa as you would oats, using twice as much milk or water as quinoa, until it's gentle and the outer germ begins to spiral away from the seed.

For an appetizing, satiating breakfast, mix almonds, chopped [apple](#), raisins, cinnamon and a pinch of brown sugar into a hot bowl of quinoa and top it with a plain yogurt. Other ingredient options include chopped dates, dried cranberries, chopped walnuts, sliced banana fresh berries, ground flaxseed, diced peaches, pumpkin seeds, honey and maple syrup.



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## **Agriculture expo begins at IIWBR**

A three-day international exposition on agriculture and horticulture started at the Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research (IIWBR), Karnal on Wednesday. The event was inaugurated on Wednesday by the National Dairy Research Institute director A K Srivastava.

The agriculture experts urged the farmers to adopt diversified agriculture for sustainable income. It was stressed to grow short-duration pulses like moong (green gram) or urad (black gram) between paddy and wheat for nutritional security and improvement of soil health.

IIWBR director Indu Sharma called upon the scientists for quality seed production as it was the base for acceleration in production and productivity of crops. She also emphasized to increase the area under wheat and barley and their output by devising climate-resilient technologies.



## **BusinessLine**

## **Rice exporters seek market access to China, Nigeria**

Faced with a sluggish trend in non-basmati rice shipments amidst stiff competition from major producers such as Thailand and Vietnam, exporters are looking for government intervention in facilitating a market access to large buyers such as Nigeria and China.

While Nigeria, one of the large buyers of the Indian cereal, has stopped official imports for about a year now due to their domestic crisis and currency-related issues, China – a potential large market – is yet to open up its borders for the non-basmati rice.

“The government should intervene and assist the exporters in seeking a market access to these large buyers Nigeria and China,” said BV Krishna

Rao, President of Rice Exporters Association. “While we have been buying crude from Nigeria for some time now, we expect that the Indian rice exporters should be given a preferential treatment by the African nation,” Rao said.



India, in fact, was a biggest supplier of par-boiled rice to Nigeria with shipments exceeding one million tonnes last year.

### **Quality issues**

Similarly, with China the Centre should expedite the process of establishing the quality norms that facilitate the non-basmati shipments, Rau said.

China, which began importing rice four years ago and annually imports about 5 million tonnes, has not granted access to Indian non-basmati rice.

The absence of defined phyto-sanitary norms between the two neighbouring countries is cited by China as the main reason for not importing from India, which the trade here sees as a non-tariff barrier.

Though China has opened up the market for basmati rice, there are hardly any shipments happening to the neighbouring nation due to their preference to scented and sticky rice varieties from Thailand, said Rajen Sundaresan, Secretary, All India Rice Exporters Association, the apex body of exporters.

“The Government should take up the issue with both China and Nigeria to facilitate the Indian non-basmati rice shipments,” he added.

## **Shipments up**

Though total rice shipments have seen a marginal increase in the current financial year, in value terms they have faced a decline.

According to the Agricultural Processed Foods and Exports Development Authority, the non-basmati rice shipments during April-August period were 2.9 million tonnes – a tad higher than the 2.75 million in corresponding period last year.

But in rupee value terms, the exports were lower by 2 per cent at ₹6,755 crore for the period (₹6,881 crore).

In dollar terms, the non-basmati shipments were down 7.5 per cent at \$1.05 billion (\$1.14 billion).

Similarly, with basmati rice, the shipments in volume terms were up at 1.67 million tonnes for April-August period against 1.43 million tonnes in the corresponding last year. However, in value terms the basmati shipments were down 18 per cent at ₹9,940 crore for the period (₹12,180 crore).

In dollar terms, the shipments dropped by 23 per cent to \$1.55 billion against \$2.03 billion the previous year.

## **Processors demand ban on futures trading of soyabean**

The Soyabean Processors' Association of India (SOPA) has sent a letter to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) demanding a ban on futures trading of soyabean in order to help the processing industry.

It apprised the SEBI Chairman UK Sinha on the “unhealthy speculation” in soyabean futures on commodity exchanges which have rendered soyameal exports uncompetitive due to high domestic prices of the raw material.

## **Exports dip**

“The net effect of this speculation-driven price rise is that the soyabean industry is suffering from huge disparity in crushing...More than 50 per cent of the soyabean crushing plants have already closed down due to this,” it said.

The Association says in the letter that the industry had traditionally exported 60-70 per cent of total soyameal production.



In 2014-15, however, overseas sales dropped to 6.46 lakh tonnes (lt) from 28.41 lt in the previous year, a 77 per cent slide.

It fears that exports may decline further this year. Domesitc exporters are outpriced in the international market by competitors in Argentina, Brazil and the US who can sell their meal at a price that is \$100-150/tonne lower.

### **High prices**

“The only reason for this uncompetitiveness is that the raw material price in India is high and the main reason for this unusually high price of soyabean is unhealthy speculation in soyabean futures at the commodity exchanges,” it explained.

The letter added that large speculators on the futures market were moving prices up and down without “any link to the physical market and without any logic.”

“The upward price movement (on the NCDEX) between September 1 and October 5 is about 14 per cent which has no justification whatsoever, because the new soyabean crop has just started arriving and this is the peak season for harvests...and prices between October and December always remain subdued,” it said.

## **Lawrencedale Agroprocessing to expand presence**

Lawrencedale Agroprocessing India Private Ltd, which is into marketing of fruits and vegetables under the “Leaf” brand is strengthening its foot prints in the South.

The company started with marketing of carrots about 18 months back. In the last two weeks, it has introduced more than 15 vegetables including potato, okra, celery and broccoli, beetroot, cabbage and so on.

P Vijayaraghavan, Founder-promoter of the venture, told *BusinessLine* that there is huge acceptance for the packed, branded fresh farm produce.

“The sale of Leaf vegetables has touched one tonne a day in Bengaluru alone. It is available in 10-12 premium stores in Whitefield area. We are yet to reach out to other locations in the city,” he said.

The company is gearing up to introduce Leaf across six stores in Coimbatore later this week. “We have indents for 80-90 kg of Leaf packets a day from each of the stores,” he said. The company is in the process of identifying stores in Chennai and Hyderabad for selling branded farm fresh vegetables.

## **Banks jittery as deficient monsoon puts ₹8 lakh cr of farm loans at risk**





With rainfall below average across most parts of the country, the impact on the agriculture sector is making bankers nervous. The total exposure of banks to the sector has shot up to ₹8,07,800 crore from ₹7,20,400 crore in August last year.

With the India Meteorological Department pegging the monsoon deficit at 14 per cent below the long-period average, bankers are being forced to restructure some of these loans in a bid to keep non-performing assets (NPA) in check.

“There could be problems where the rain deficiency is over 20 per cent. It is also a State subject as to which region is declared drought zone and, accordingly, banks will have to provide for the restructuring,” said GK Kansal, Chief General Manager, State Bank of India.

| <b>Not so healthy</b>   |                            |          |                            |          |
|---|----------------------------|----------|----------------------------|----------|
| <b>Agriculture portfolio of top public sector banks</b> (₹ crore) |                            |          |                            |          |
|   | <b>As on June 30, 2015</b> |          | <b>As on June 30, 2014</b> |          |
|   | Exposure                   | NPAs (%) | Exposure                   | NPAs (%) |
| State Bank of India   | 1,15,813                   | 9.36     | 1,18,380                   | 10.04    |
| Bank of Baroda (March end)  | 32,586                     | 5.30     | 27,294                     | 5.15     |
| Punjab National Bank  | 57,314                     | -        | 48,901                     | -        |
| Bank of India   | 43,261                     | 5.01     | 38,498                     | 0.26     |

Restructuring leads to renewal of loans by extending the tenure for the borrower, usually with a lower instalment amount. While this avoids immediate default of loans, lower returns hurt the lender.

The latest data show that some parts in northern and western India are reeling under an acute monsoon deficit. The deficiency in east and west Uttar Pradesh stands at around 46 and 43 per cent, respectively.

While the Konkan and Goa region face 31 per cent deficiency, central Maharashtra and Marathwada face a 32 per cent and 39 per cent deficit, respectively.

Abhishek Bhattacharya, Co-head - Banks and FI Ratings, India Ratings & Research, said that NPAs in the farm sector could go up, though the impact could be felt with a lag. “We could see more of an impact on derivatives

such as tractor and construction equipment loans, or even rural housing to some extent, where the loans could see some slippages,” he said.

Adding to the bankers’ woes, in April, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a hike in compensation for farmers whose crop had been damaged by un-seasonal rains and also asked banks to ease the criteria for them to get government support.

Though this is good for the farmers, an India Ratings report estimates that system-wide agricultural NPAs as a percentage of total agricultural advances will rise to 8.4 per cent by FY16 from 4.9 per cent in FY14 as a direct consequence of the un-seasonal rains.

“As a result, the gross NPA ratio (on total advances) for the banking system will increase by 30 basis points. This will translate into a profitability impact of 2-3 basis points on system-wide post-tax return on assets,” the report said.

### **Still positive**

But despite the challenges, bankers are putting up a brave face. “We are not expecting the NPAs to rise as farmers have also diversified in terms of their crops and they’re able to shift the risks to different crops,” said SBI’s Kansal.

An executive with another PSU bank said: “There will be a slight impact but we will be providing additional restructuring so we need not take a hit on our books.” The official said that Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra are somewhat affected and added that a report from the State Level Bankers’ Committee with recommendations on further action is expected in a month’s time.

## **Business Standard**

### [Online organic food brand Naturally Yours receives seed funding](#)

The undisclosed amount was received from serial entrepreneur and angel investor Sanjay Mehta

Mumbai-based online organic food brand Naturally Yours has raised an undisclosed amount in a seed round of funding from serial entrepreneur and angel investor Sanjay Mehta.

With this investment, Naturally Yours plans to expand to new product categories and increase the product range.

Founded in 2010 by husband-wife duo Vinod Kumar and Priya Prakash, Naturally Yours has about 100 products under its brand name. It sells on portals like Amazon, Flipkart, shopclues, Healthkart and Pepperfry, besides on its own website NaturallyYours.in.



“The money will also be used to expand the core and the support team as we plan to achieve a run rate of between 10,000 and 15,000 orders per month in the next 12 to 24 months,” Vinod Kumar, founder of Naturally Yours, said on Wednesday.

“We are one of the leading brands on Amazon India in their health and gourmet section executing over 2,000 orders per month. And, we see this increasing over 40 per cent, month-on-month,” Kumar added.

Stating that with more Indians consuming organic food, the Indian organic food market is growing at a compound annual growth rate of 30 per cent and is set to touch \$1 billion in 2015, Kumar said Naturally Yours was planning to focus on selling purely in the online medium over the next 12 to 24 months.

“We see a huge gap in a lot of product categories in the organic and wellness industry and we will launch about 100 new products over the next 12 to 24 months to fulfil this gap,” said Priya Prakash, co-founder of Naturally Yours.

### [Pulses' prices up on lower output estimate](#)

Pipeline inventory depletes, consumer relief only after December harvest of new crop

Over the past two months, the price of [pulses](#) has surged due to estimates of less production. Deficient and uneven distribution of [monsoon](#) rain is thought likely to reduce the average yield of the kharif crop, despite a rise in the overall area sown.

Data from the central government-run Agmarknet shows the price of pigeon pea (tur) at the wholesale market in Meerut, UP, is now Rs 10,400 a quintal, from Rs 7,230 a qtl two months earlier.

The price of pulses had in fact begun rising once India Meteorological Department had forecast a deficient monsoon, in June. Since then, prices have doubled. At the benchmark Latur (Maharashtra) market, [tur](#) is now Rs 11,500 a quintal from Rs 8,350 a quintal in early August. In Delhi, the spot price is Rs 180-190 a kg for retail consumers.

“The price has been spiraling for a few months because of a sharp decline in carryover stock from the previous year. Apart from India, there are reports of lower crop size in major producing countries. A combination of all these has resulted in a sharp rally in pulses’ price,” said Pravin Dongre, chairman, India Pulses and Grains Association.

Government data shows kharif output of pulses has fallen 21 per cent over the past four years, to 5.63 million tonnes (mt) in 2014-15 (July–June). The first advance estimates of the agriculture ministry reported a further decline, albeit marginal, to 5.56 mt in the 2015-16 kharif.

According to trade sources, stockists waited for the final picture of monsoon rain before placing huge import orders but in the three months of waiting, the pipeline inventory has dried. Supply from Myanmar and Africa, the two major sources, is expected to be shaky due to lower output.

Sowing of pulses, as mentioned earlier, is actually more than last year. By early September, sowing was reported over 10.84 million hectares, from 9.76 mn ha at the same time last year.

“However, (there has been) crop damage in drought-prone areas like Marathwada in Maharashtra and some major producing centres in Karnataka. On the import front, there is no major supplier in the world today. So, consumers will have to bear with high prices till harvesting of the kharif crop begins in December,” said Dongre.

India has been dependent on import of pulses, estimated this year at five mt. Late-season rain, however, has raised hope for better output in the rabi season, from where comes around 70 per cent of annual output.

Higher tur prices have also pulled up that of other varieties. Masoor (split red) in the benchmark Pune mandi is up 23 per cent to Rs 7,475 a quintal; [chana](#) (Bengal gram) in Ujjain has risen similarly to Rs 6,000 a quintal.

### Climate change the historical responsibility of the developed world: India

Environment minister says billions of people suffering from climate change cannot be ignored, even if the rich, developed countries tried to evade responsibility



Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said on Wednesday, the present climate change is the historical responsibility of the developed world. He said that the billions of people suffering from climate change cannot be ignored, even if the rich, developed countries tried to evade responsibility, he told reporters after reviewing India's preparedness before the summit. The upcoming Conference of Parties (COP21) conference in Paris this December, would aim to achieve a legally-binding and universal agreement on climate, aiming to keep global warming below 2°C.

The minister added that India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions are ambitious and have been welcomed by the entire world. He also underscored India's commitment to pursue the issues of climate

justice, lifestyles and sustainable practices, addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his recent trip to the US.

Javadekar said, the agreement should be 'progressive and pragmatic' and the accord should deliver 'climate justice' to poorer sections and developing nations. India will also bring up the issue of providing carbon space to developing nations, he added.

Referring to the Earth Overshoot report, Javadekar said that it has already pointed out "that if we continue with the extravagant consumption, we will require five planets and India already values sustainable consumption practice."

India recently announced a "comprehensive and ambitious" pledge to reduce its greenhouse emission intensity by upto 35 per cent by 2030 from 2005 levels, a 75 per cent jump over its present voluntary commitment.