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THE HINDU

Shallot price to remain stable

The Agro Market Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre (AMI & BPC) of the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agri Business has indicated that the price of small onions would remain stable during the 'thaipattam' harvest season. In a price advisory, it has indicated that the price of good quality small onion will prevail at around Rs. 22 - 24 a kg during April - May.

The price advisory was based on an analysis of the prices that had prevailed in the Dingidul market over the past 17 years and a traders' survey.

The analysis and survey was done by the back office of the AMI & BPC in the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development Studies (CARDS), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, to help farmers take appropriate sowing decisions.

India is the major producer of small onion in the world. The country exports small onion to United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Small onion is mainly cultivated in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. In Tamil Nadu, the crop was raised on 7,983 hectares (ha) in Perambalur, 3,500 ha in Tiruchi, 2,990 ha in Dindigul, 1,828 ha in Tirunelveli, 1,036 ha in Tirupur, 1,300 ha in Thoothukudi, 1,988 ha in Namakkal, 1,242 ha in Virudhunagar, 1,131 ha in Coimbatore and 860 ha in Erode in 2014-15. These districts accounted for 88 per cent of total small onion cultivated area and 89 per cent of production in Tamil Nadu. In 2014-15, shallot area of cultivation increased by 12.7 per cent over the previous year.

25 direct procurement centres inadequate for Erode district, say farmers

The 25 direct procurement centres for paddy operated by the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation were inadequate for Erode district with a vast geographic spread, cultivators say.

Even the existing DPCs are not evenly spread out, opening up opportunities for middlemen to exploit farmers. Hundreds of farmers who are distant from the DPCs prefer to sell their produce to middlemen in order to avoid the trouble of transporting the produce to the procurement centres and waiting there for days for their turn. Ideally, there ought to be a DPC at the level of every revenue village, K.V. Ponnaiyan, president of Tamil Nadu Swadeshi Farmers' Association said.

Unlike in the DPCs where farmers are paid in excess of Rs. 14 per kg, the middlemen procure the produce for Rs. 13. During the harvest season, the middlemen surreptitiously gain access to DPCs and sell the produce they procure directly from the fields, farmers of Chenniamalai area said.

They incur only the transport cost and make windfall gains, the farmers said, referring to the closure of a few DPCs in Gobichettipalayam a month ago due to apprehensions that paddy produced in Karnataka was procured there.

Such irregularities, farmers said, was due to the connivance of the TNCSC staff with unscrupulous elements. The district administration was apprised of the state of affairs in the DPCs at the Grievances Day meeting last week.

Turmeric worth more than Rs. 60 lakh auctioned

Turmeric worth more than Rs. 60 lakh was auctioned at the Tiruchengode Agricultural Producers Cooperative Marketing Society here on Saturday. While 'Virali' turmeric variety fetched a price between Rs. 7,900 and Rs. 10,169 per quintal, the 'Kizhangu' variety fetched a price between Rs. 5,999 and Rs. 8,117 and 'Panangali' variety Rs. 7,099 and Rs. 14,899 per quintal. A total of 1,200 quintal of turmeric was auctioned for Rs. 60 lakhs on the occasion. The farmers said that they managed to get Rs. 510 more per quintal in Tiruchengode society.

Water released from Sathanur Reservoir

Only system tanks will get water for 10 days

Tiruvannamalai Collector A.Gnanasekaran showers flowers on the water gushing out of the sluice gates at Sathanur reservoir on Monday.

Water release for irrigation from Sathanur Reservoir, built across river Then Pennai, began on Monday.

However the water from the dam with abysmally low storage would cater only to the 89 system tanks attached to left and right bank canals of the dam, that too for a mere 10 days. Direct canal irrigation has been skipped for straight third year due to poor rainfall and inflow.

The District Collector A. Gnanasekaran opened the sluice gates of the pick-up dam, a small subsidiary dam constructed downstream, 8 km away from the main reservoir for the purpose of distributing water into irrigation canals.

Water level in the 119 feet high dam stood at 84.35 feet at the time of opening of the sluice. The dam had 1,887 million cubic feet (mcft) of water as against the full capacity of 7,321 mcft. The left bank canal would get 150 cusecs (cubic feet per second) of flow and right bank canal would get 200 cusecs for ten days and the release would be stopped by 9.30 a.m. on February 12.

After opening the sluice Mr.Gnanasekaran asked the farmers to use water prudently. He along with Selvaraj, executive engineer of Water Resource Organisation of PWD; Jayaraman, Reservoir Project Committee Chairman; S.R.Dharmalingam, chairman of Thandampattu Land Development Bank; Janakiraman, Thandampattu Panchayat Union Chairman and Ramesh, Assistant Engineer of the dam showered flowers on the gushing waters.

Farm research project for Wayanad

It envisages a centre for demonstration of hi-tech farming

Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) Vice Chancellor P. Rajendran has said that proper demonstration is the most effective way to transfer modern technology to the grass-roots level.

He was speaking after launching a mega research project for poverty alleviation through technology intervention and people's participation in Wayanad district at the valedictory of the National Agrifesta and Pooppoli 2015, a State-level flower show, organised by the KAU at its Regional Agriculture Research Station (RARS), Ambalavayal, on Monday.

The new project, estimated at Rs.7.75 crore, envisages establishing a technology centre for research and demonstration of hi-tech farming at Ambalavayal.

“The prime objective of agricultural research is to ensure food and nutritional security of the masses through sustainable agriculture,” Dr. Rajendran said.

Integrated scheme

Multidisciplinary and realistic approach backed by appropriate technology was necessary for successful extension of knowledge generated through research.

Wayanad being a special agricultural zone endowed with favourable agro-climatic conditions, an integrated project combining training and demonstration of viable technologies with entrepreneurial capacity building would do wonders for empowering the rural population, especially the youth and the women, he said.

Setting up of global market centre for coconut in Kochi mooted

Facility to focus on issues of production, marketing to improve pricing mechanism



A proposal for setting up an international market centre in Kochi for coconut was put forth at the Asia Pacific Coconut Community (APCC) meeting which began here on Monday. The meeting discussed the issue and is expected to take a decision soon.

Making a presentation at the APCC's 18-member ministerial meeting, Coconut Development Board Chairman T.K. Jose said that the APCC accounted for 90 per cent of the world coconut production, but the farmers were forced to sell the produce in a buyers' market where the prices were decided by a buyers' cartel. An international centre would focus on issues of production and marketing with a view to improving the price discovery mechanism.

Kochi would fit the bill as the city had commendable information technology infrastructure for setting up a communication network to exchange information to member countries. Kochi, with a port of international standards, was capable of handling massive quantities of cargo which could be helpful to countries intending to transport cargo.

The international airport at Nedumbasserry, near here, would facilitate air travel as well as cargo movement. The city hosting the headquarters of the Coconut Development Board and the Coir Board, too would benefit the coconut producing countries to find ways to have a better marketing arrangement and improved pricing for value added products.

Mr. Jose said a Trade Study Committee could be set up to suggest methods to promote coconut trade. Abolition of double taxation would be an important factor in easing the trade barriers. India had agreements with over 80 countries to avoid double taxation. The country was the second largest consumer market in the world, he said.

Centre of excellence

Mr. Jose mooted the idea of establishing in India an international centre of excellence for coconut. The centre could focus on best practices, research and training in the sector. He said that Tamil Nadu had already identified 100 acres for the purpose.

The Union government would extend support to the proposal for setting up a centre of excellence, said Sanjeev Chopra, Joint Secretary. The capital cost

of Rs.10 crore could be borne by the Union government and a self-sustaining model could be devised to run the institution.

Several member countries such as Malaysia, Fiji, the Philippines, and Papua New Guinea supported the proposal, but wanted a separate committee to study the move. They also highlighted the need for a consensus and consent from the governments back home.

‘Adequate funds to be given for wetlands’



A visitor at an exhibition organised to mark the World Wetland Day in Bhubaneswar on Monday.- Photo: Lingaraj Panda

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday said adequate fund would be provided for implementation of management plans of important wetlands of the State.

Management plans are being prepared for 17 major wetlands of the State under the aegis of the Odisha Wetland Development Authority (OWDA).

“The Wetland International has been commissioned for formulation of comprehensive management plans of important wetlands of the State. Necessary funding support is being provided to OWDA for implementation of the management plans from the State budget,” said Mr. Patnaik on occasion of celebration of World Wetland Day-2015 here on Monday.

He praised the successful restoration of Chilika Lake saying it was a perfect example of how the restoration of a wetland with most appropriate strategy could not only restore the ecosystem of the wetland, but also can contribute

significantly towards the improvement of livelihood of local communities due to increase in productivity.

In addition to 17 wetlands, the Odisha government is working on holistic conservation plan to prevent siltation of large reservoirs.

Under the Catchment Area Treatment Plan (CATP), massive efforts will be put in to stop felling of trees, change destructive agricultural practice and reduce dependency of people on forest resources.

While the State government has already started working on Upper Indravati and Upper Kolab Reserves, integrated management planning of Hirakud and Rengali reservoir is underway.

The government had to pre-empt its action to prevent siltation after an assessment of Kuanria dam in Nayagarh district shocked officials.

Over a period of 12 years, an estimated 55 per cent of the dam capacity was filled with siltation. The dam's life span was reduced by almost 60 per cent.

Subsequently, the government had approved CATP for Upper Kolab Hydroelectric Project and Upper Indravati Multipurpose Project. An estimated Rs.596 crore would be spent on the project.

Price commission a toothless body'

The Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (Kodihalli Chandrashekhar fraction) alleged that the role of the Agriculture Price Commission was to mislead the farmers who were demanding a scientific minimum support price for their produce.

"The Commission was supposed to safeguard farmers against the fall in prices by fixing a scientific price. But it is proved to be a toothless body born for misleading the people," Amin Pasha Diddigi, state secretary of the organisation, said.

Mr. Diddigi strongly opposed the Union Government's land acquisition ordinance by stating that the ordinance was to appease industrialists.

Mixed response to soil health cards

They may not mean anything as long as ryots are in clutches of money-lenders



The need of the hour is understand the dilemma of farmers, says an agricultural scientist.- Photo: S. Harpal Singh

The plan of the Telangana government to introduce soil health cards to decrease agricultural investment and increase productivity of crops could come a cropper in backward areas like Adilabad where the choice of inputs is 'influenced' by private money lenders. About 75 per cent of the nearly 4 lakh farmers in the district own five or less acres of land and depend on loans from private lenders, notwithstanding the financing done by banks.

A soil health card given to individual farmers will contain crop wise recommendations in terms of fertilizer and nutrients for the kind of soil which he is given to cultivating.

The details of the soil texture and composition are being worked out under a pilot project in the mandals of Indervelli in Adilabad, Thimmajipet in Mahabubnagar and Gajwel in Medak.

Each of the small and marginal farmer draws at least Rs. 25,000 from money lenders which includes the cost of fertilizer and nutrients supplied by the latter.

Such farmers are the ones who will be faced with a dilemma when they are required to choose between the given types of fertilizer as per the recommendations in their soil health card and those which are available with the money lender.

As the fertilizer and nutrients are ‘purchased’ on credit, the helpless poor farmers are left with Hobson’s choice, so to say.

“The government needs to take care of this also,” an agriculture scientist observed.

The suggestions in the soil health card will also need to incorporate an action plan for farming in unfavourable weather conditions. Adilabad, where agriculture is rain-fed witnesses droughts or excessive rains periodically which can also defeat the best of intentions.

The normal average annual rainfall of the district is 1,100 mm which is highly conducive for rain-fed agriculture. However, the variation at an interval of about three years could be 50 per cent either way.

Activists oppose open field trials of GM crops

Raising concerns over Maharashtra government’s approval for open field trials of GM crops, activists have written to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis seeking a reversal of his decision.

“By approving these open air trials of unknown new organisms in nature, the State is making a statement that it abides by the industry’s pressure rather than upholding citizens’ right to biosafety — safe environment and safe food,” a letter written jointly by the Coalition for a GM Free India and the Coalition for a GM Free Maharashtra said.

The letter said other States had not yet given permission for open field trials after adverse reports by expert committees looking into the impact of such open field trials.

“The Supreme Court-appointed Technical Expert Committee (2013), the Parliamentary Standing Committee on GM crops (2012), the recent Subramanian Committee (2014) have all strongly recommended that open air field trials of GM crops not be granted. In addition, it has been specifically pointed out by these committees that crops where India is the centre of origin/diversity should not be under any circumstance allowed to be genetically modified and tested in open air. This would jeopardize the gene pool in the place of origin,” the letter has said.

The activists pointed out that crops like rice, brinjal and chickpeas have India as their centre of origin/diversity.

Address environmental issues urgently: House panel



Chairman of Standing Committee on Science, Technology, Environment and Forests Ashwani Kumar addressing media persons in Visakhapatnam on Monday. — Photo: C.V. Subrahmanyam

Environmental challenges are many and real and must be addressed urgently, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology and Environment and Forests Ashwani Kumar said here on Monday.

Civil societies and government departments must act together and the laws meant for environment protection must be implemented, Mr. Ashwani Kumar said at a press conference after a two-day meeting with stakeholders like representatives of major industries, civil societies and fishermen organisations to elicit their views on pollution and environment in the city.

Reacting to questions on beach erosion, a major problem that cropped up again on the city coast, the Chairman said there were certain inadequacies, ambiguities and contradictions in implementing the laws relating to coastal areas and often the States are approaching the Centre for clarifications.

The discussions have been extremely useful and issues were discussed in totality, he said and also observed that ‘government agencies must understand the urgency of the need to effectively implement the laws and measures’.

U.N. agency says 2014 was warmest year on record

The U.N. weather agency says 2014 was the warmest year on record, though the temperature difference with 2010 and 2005 is so small that it’s impossible to say for sure which of the three years was the hottest.

The World Meteorological Organization’s analysis on Monday mirrored findings two weeks ago by NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and also included data from the Met Office in Britain.

The Geneva-based WMO said surface temperatures were 0.57 degrees Celsius above average last year.

That’s slightly warmer than 2010 and 2005, but the difference was within the uncertainty margin of 0.10 degrees Celsius.

With 14 of the 15 hottest years recorded this century, WMO chief Michel Jarraud said warming is expected to continue as atmospheric levels of heat-trapping CO2 rise.

Commodity prices

Here are the prices of various commodities in Chennai.

Price scale is given as Rs./kg

Commodity	Quantity	Now	Year ago
Rice	1 kg	55	52
Atta	1 kg	42	42
Rava	1 kg	52	52
Tur Dal	1 kg	90	84

Commodity	Quantity	Now	Year ago
Urad Dal	1 kg	96	82
Channa	1 kg	80	76
Sugar	1 kg	44	40
Table Salt	1 kg	12	12
Mustard	100 g	9	8.5
Dhania	1 kg	165	115
Red Chillies	1 kg	190	120
Garlic	1 kg	120	130
Tamarind	1 kg	120	110
Refined Oil	1 ltr	168	167
Gingelly Oil	1 ltr	165	185
Ghee	1 kg	450	444
Milk	500 ml	19	14
Coffee	50 g	77	77
Tea	100 g	42	42
Health drink	500 g	184	177
Potato	1 kg	33	25
Onion (big)	1 kg	27	18
Tomato	1 kg	26	12
Beans	1 kg	26	35

Commodity	Quantity	Now	Year ago
Carrot	1 kg	58	37
Beetroot	1 kg	29	22
Brinjal	1 kg	32	22
Cabbage	1 kg	36	15
Cauliflower	1 kg	45	23
Drumstick	1 kg	160	105
Pumpkin	1 kg	18	18
Banana	1 kg	35	42
Apple	1 kg	170	160
Grapes	1 kg	60	50
Sweet Lime	1 kg	50	44

**Source: Nathan Enterprises & Kovai Pazhamudir Nilayam, Chennai.*

How mother's lifestyle affects obesity risk of kids

Ads by Google



Mother's lifestyle and diet even before conception can affect the chance of her kids becoming obese later in life.

Mother's lifestyle and diet even before conception can affect the chance of her kids becoming obese later in life, a study has confirmed.

“Our findings suggest that interventions to prevent obesity need to start earlier, even before conception, and that having a healthy body weight and not smoking at this time could be key,” said lead researcher Sian Robinson from University of Southampton in Britain.

For the study, the researchers looked at five early life obesity risk factors, a short duration of breastfeeding (less than one month) and four maternal factors during pregnancy – obesity, excess pregnancy weight gain, smoking, and low vitamin D status.

At age four, children with four or five of these factors were four times more likely to be overweight or obese than children who had experienced none, and fat mass was, on an average, 19 percent higher.

By age six, the risk increased and these children were 4.65 times more likely to be overweight or obese and fat mass was 47 percent higher.

Importantly, these differences were not explained by other factors, such as the children's quality of diet or physical activity levels.

The data analysed came from 991 children taking part in the Southampton Women's Survey – one of the largest studies of mothers recruited before pregnancy, along with their infants and children.

The study appeared in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Recipe: Cheese Khakra Chaat & Rabdi



Chaats are something we are excited about. The mention of paani puri and sev puri brings sparkle to our eyes, how about some cheese-filled chaat for evening snacks. And, more can one ask you if you get a plate of chilled rabdi after a spicy plate of chaat. Here's the recipe and you must try it.

CHEESE KHAKRA CHAT

Ingredients:

Khakras: 8-10 nos.

Tomato & cucumbers evenly cut into small pieces: 2 cups

Any farsan of your choice: 1 cup

Puffed rice (Kurmure): 1 cup

Green chutney (thick): 1 cup

Tamarind chutney (thick): 1 cup

Pinch of rock salt & black pepper, Yellow & red sev Grated cheese

Coriander leaves. Method: Take a deep pan & fry the khakra just for 2 sec

until they become pink & crispy. Keep them aside, take 1 khakra & spread both chutney evenly over it. Then spread tomatoes & cucumbers, salt, pepper powder, some chutney again then puffed rice and farsan over it. Then decorate it with cheese, red sev, yellow sev & coriander leaves. Green Chutney: Take a bowl of coriander & mint leaves, 4 green chilies, ½ table spoon lemon juice, salt & some sev for thick consistency, jaljeera powder & grind all together in mixer with a little water. Tamarind Chutney: Soak tamarind & some dates in water, add jaggery & salt. Grind into a thick paste.

RABDI

Ingredients:

Milk: 1 ½ Litre

Cardamom powder: ¼ table spoon

Almonds and Pistachio slices or powder- 1 cup

Sugar: 1 cup

A few Saffron strands.

Method: Take a non-stick shallow frying pan & heat the milk. Bring the milk to boil & then stir continuously every 2 min, to avoid sticking take a wooden spatula & keep the malai aside every time it floats up. Do it continuously until you get a thick consistency & small-small bits of milk. Then add sugar, cardamom powder, saffron soaked in water. Then pour the rabdi in a bowl & decorate with chopped almonds and pistachio. Refrigerate it & serve chilled.

3 Best foods for your hair

There's a limit to how much nourishment expensive shampoos, conditioners and serums can provide to your hair!

If you want a naturally lustrous-looking mane, you will need to consume certain foods in your diet that will provide sustenance to your hair from deep within. The following are foods that you should consume daily for beautiful, stronger hair.

Eggs: These contain a special vitamin called biotin. This helps in hair growth and also helps renew hair follicles, so that you get thicker hair. In fact, lack of biotin can create dry, brittle hair, which makes it susceptible to breaking. Eggs also help the scalp, making it one of the best hair foods.

Green leafy vegetables: Dark green vegetables like broccoli and spinach have hair-healing powers because of Vitamins A and C, which secrete natural scalp oil. This works as a hair conditioner, providing essential oils that are important for hair growth and renewal. It is these natural oils that will always keep your hair shiny.

Strawberries: Fruits like strawberries that are rich in vitamin C help absorb iron, which is necessary for healthy hair and their growth. Eating just a few strawberries a day will help you get stronger strands of hair.

[Substitute sugar with these in your diet](#)

That cutting down on sugar is important to maintain good health and great physique is known. While completely ignoring sugar is also not advisable, you can always substitute them in your diet. Here are two of the most common and healthy aliases for sugar:

Jaggery: Add jaggery to your coffee/tea instead of sugar; you can use it when you are cooking dal and curries, too. "Jaggery is rich in iron, and having a few grams of it every day will maintain the haemoglobin level in the blood, without increasing the risk of diabetes. It's also rich in potassium, and hence, reduces water retention in the body. Jaggery also acts as a catalyst, activating the digestive enzymes in our body," says Swastik Mishra, a diabetologist.

Honey: The many benefits of honey is widely known and substituting this for sugar is definitely an advantage. Nutritionist and dietician Anusha M says, "Honey helps in preventing cold and cough, it strengthens the heart and also purifies blood. Consuming a spoon of honey with lemon in lukewarm water early in the mornings will also aid weight loss. Since honey is not acidic in nature, it can be used by everyone." So, add a dash of honey in your beverage and desserts instead of sugar.

[A quick guide to using olive oil](#)

Here are some pointers to keep in mind while cooking with olive oil.

Olive oil is widely used in India now, to cook everything - from salads to pastas. And it is not a thing just limited to star hotels and restaurants. Home chefs and homemakers too are using it in daily cooking. Here are a few things to keep in mind if you're planning to cook with olive oil, and some replacements if olive oil cannot be used -

Olive oil is generally drizzled over salads and pasta. It should never be cooked too much over the stove, unless you have to quickly saute some veggies.

Avoid using olive oil when you are required to heat something or cook something on high heat, like frying something. Olive oil should never be used on high heat as it forms compounds which harm one's health. If you need to cook food at high heat, use canola oil instead of olive oil. This oil is perfect for food items which require high temperature and slow cooking.

Begin your meal with something sweet: Ayurveda



Menus put desserts at the end, but Ayurveda wants you to begin your meals on a sweet note...

Whether it's regular dalroti-sabji or a lavish eight-course feast, the sweets always have to wait till the end. In fact, the word `dessert' originated from the French word `desservir' which means `to clean the table'. But who's complaining? Habitually, long after you have polished off a sumptuous meal and the brain has sent out satiety signals, there's always room for that baked cheesecake. However, while we have been habituated to satisfying our sweet tooth after a meal (the post-dinner walk is often an excuse to stop by at the local ice-cream vendor), Ayurveda argues that the sweet should come first.

"The sweet taste acts quickly on the taste buds and saliva. Eating the sweet item first enables the flow of digestive secretions," says nutritionist Supriyaa Nair. "If you eat sweets at the end of meals, you are slowing down your

digestion." If the idea of gobbling a gulab jamun before roti-sabji doesn't agree with you, having even a bite or two of a sweet before vegetables and chapati or rice will help you absorb vitamins and nutrients better.

Besides, says Nair, eating dessert at the end means that the empty calories and sugar suppress the digestive fire, causing fermentation and indigestion thanks to the acid produced. It's not uncommon to experience bloating in this case.

FOLLOW ORDERS

A chapter in the Sushruta Samhita, one of the main texts of Ayurveda, deals with the order of tastes involved in a meal. According to it, you should have a sweet at the outset, something sour and salty in the middle, followed by pungent, bitter and astringent eats.

In a hungry person, a sweet also helps overpower the vayu (wind) in the stomach, while sour and salty tastes in the middle of the meal help stimulate the digestive fire in the small intestine. The pungent, bitter, and astringent taste helps subdue kapha dosh (earth). **THE SWEET TRAP** So, how did we fall into the trap of eating calorie-loaded sugars after a heavy meal? Macrobiotic nutritionist Shonali Sabherwal explains, "From a macrobiotic perspective, sugar craves sugar because it is yin energy." Each food group has an energy that is categorised as either yin (loosely classified as female energy) or yang (masculine energy).

"You feel expanded with sugar because sugar creates energy that is upward rising, and you want more of that. So, a simple carb craves sugar, which is why a meal loaded with simple carbs is usually followed by a dessert," she says. Also, heavy animal proteins found in eggs and meats (yang energy) are tough to digest, leaving you bloated and aggressive.

That's why, after a meaty meal, your body wants to balance out the dense yang energy by craving yin sugar.

Sabherwal suggests you challenge your sugar craving by seeking it in fruits and veggies (carrots, onions, onion cabbage, sweet potato and red pumpkin) rather than white sugar eats.

A MEAL IN ITSELF

Ayurveda also claims that the body cannot do without sweet altogether. It's imperative tissue development. When consumed in moderation, sweets are medicinal, even.

Dietician Pooja Makhija says that doesn't apply to refined sugar stripped of all nutrition. "Sugar desserts add load to the body, piling up calories which your body stores as fat since that is the only source of storage form it knows. A dessert is so full of calories, you'd rather have it as a meal in itself, preferably before a workout, so that you can burn off all those calories."

[Authentic South India recipes](#)



Tamarind Vettha Koyambhu

Ingredients: Tamarind- a small lemon size ball Asafoetida (Hing)- a pinch Mustard seeds (Raai)- 1/4 tsp Fenugreek Seeds (Methi)- 1/4 tsp Turmeric Powder (Haldi powder)- 1/2 tsp Chana Dal-1 tsp Sambhar Powder - 1/2 tbsp Coriander Powder- 4 tbsp Salt to taste Cut Drum Stick or cut lady figure -10 pieces Rice flour mixed in a little water Groundnut Oil- 5 tbsp Curry leaves

Method: 1. Soak tamarind in 1/2 cup hot water for 15 minutes and extract pulp. 2. Heat oil in a deep bottomed vessel. 3. Add Hing, Raai, Methi, chana dal, curry leaves and allow raai seeds to splutter. 4. Add cut pieces of drum sticks/lady fingers and fry till they turn slightly golden brown in colour. 5.

Add tamarind extract, turmeric powder, sambhar powder, daniya powder and salt in the kadai and mix them well. 6. Bring it to boil and add rice flour (mixed in a little water). 7. Cook until the koyambhu becomes semi thick. (Not too watery and not too thick). 8 Serve with hot cooked rice.

KOTHAVARANGAI PARUPPU USILI Ingredients: Cluster Beans [*Gavar Falli* in Hindi] -150 gms Tuvar Dal - 2 cup Green Chillies - 1pc Red Chillies - 4 pcs Curry Leaves - 2 stems Salt to taste For Seasoning: Groundnut Oil - 4 tbsp Urid Dal - 2 tsp Asafoetida - a pinch(to taste) Curry Leaves - 2 stems

Method: 1. Soak dal for 4 hours. 2.Cut the cluster beans into small pieces and then boil them in a cooker with 2 whistles. 3. Strain all water from the soaked dal, add ingredients except the boiled cluster beans 4. Grind to a rough paste adding very little water, if necessary. 5. Heat the oil in a kadai. Add urid dal, asafoetida, salt & curry leaves and fry till urid dal turns slightly golden brown. 6. Add, already prepared tuvar dal paste also into the kadai and fry them in low flame till they disintegrate themselves. 7. Now add the boiled cluster beans and mix it for 2-3 minutes. 8. If necessary, add more oil and fry till crispy. 9. Mix it with cooked rice and enjoy delicious meal with tamarind Vetta koyambhu.

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Fiji keen to sign pact with Coconut Board

Kochi, February 2:

Fiji is keen on signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with India for technology transfer between the two countries, especially in market development activities in the coconut sector.

“It is a good opportunity for us to share the areas of common interest,” Inia Seruiratu, Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management, Republic of Fiji, said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had assured Fiji of assistance in agriculture and small-holder diary development during his visit, following which Fiji

expressed its interest in entering into a MoU with Indian agencies in areas such as seed development, training and technical expertise exchange, Seruiratu said.

The Minister was in Kochi with a delegation to attend the 51st ministerial meeting of the Asia and Pacific Coconut Community to be held from February 2. He also held a meeting with TK Jose, Chairman of the Coconut Development Board. Fiji, he said, is interested in coconut product diversification, value-addition and by-product utilisation, technology transfer, quality seed production and husbandry practice.

Coco furniture

Yogesh Khan, Fijian High Commissioner to India, said that his country is interested in knowing more about the technological know-how of shell-based activated carbon and sought the estimated cost of setting up such a unit. The Fijian delegates also expressed their interest in importing the hi-end furniture to India. The Fijian furniture made out of coconut is of high demand in foreign countries with 90 per cent of the same is being exported. Talks are on with Indian counterparts in this regard, they said.

Lower arrivals boost Kochi tea prices

Kochi, February 2:

Prices of some varieties of tea moved up at Kochi tea auction following low arrivals. Good liquoring and popular marks in CTC dust category remained firm to dearer.

The quantity on offer was 11,71,500 kg with 87 per cent sold out in sale number 5. However, others were irregular and lower by Rs. 2-3 a kg and sometimes more. The decline in price was less for medium and plainer varieties, the auctioneers Forbes, Ewart & Figgis said.

Though upcountry buyers lent fair support, a better enquiry was noticed from exporters. Arrival was low for orthodox grades at 9,500 kg against last week levels. In Cochin CTC dust quotation, good varieties quoted Rs. 93-151, mediums fetched Rs. 70-108 and plain grades stood at Rs. 55-68.

Fair demand

In the leaf category, the quantity on offer in orthodox grades was 1,60,500 kg, which was low compared to last week. However, the demand for CTC grades was fair with good liquoring teas barely remained steady and tended to ease. Others were lower and witnessed heavy withdrawals due to low bids or lack of bids.

In the dust category, Mayura SFD quoted the best prices of Rs. 152 followed by Manjolai SFD at Rs. 150. In leaf varieties, Chamraj FOP fetched the best prices of Rs. 401 followed by Glendale OP (S) at Rs. 350.

Tea Board set to play a major role in regulating industry, trade

Centre plans amendment to Tea Act; small growers to get recognition, better returns

Chennai, February 2:

The Centre plans to amend the Tea Act, 1953, to monitor cultivation, research, development, promotion and regulation of the tea industry and tea trade.

In a draft, posted on the Tea Board website, the Centre also plans to refer to the Tea Board as Tea Board of India, while enhancing the term for brokers by including companies and auctioneers under its purview.

The new Act will offer protection to intellectual property rights of tea of Indian origin and can help initiate legal action against those violating it.

Currently, the Tea Board doesn't have much power to regulate either the industry or the trade. It proposes arming the board with the right to formulate policies for raising production and productivity, besides monitoring tea estates.

The draft also defines the role of the Tea Board in suggesting policies to the Centre, taking steps for research and trade and initiating welfare measures for tea estate workers.

Old Act

The Centre has come up with the draft as the Tea Act in 1953 was formulated to be in conformity with the International Tea Agreement (ITA)

that India had signed. The Agreement, which stipulates regulating production to ensure there is no glut, expired in 1956 but no steps had been taken to adapt the Indian Tea Act with the situation post-ITA. More importantly, the draft acknowledges small tea growers and gives them a new identity. Accordingly, a small grower holding less than 25 acres of holding in his/her name will be identified as small growers. In the current Act, there is no definition of a small grower. The draft also proposes registration of small growers and paying them a reasonable price for tea or tea waste. The Centre can ensure the payment through an order.

The new Act will do away with export allotment, which has become redundant, while defining import norms. It also paves way for tea-growing states to get better representation on the board.

The Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Association has welcomed the proposed changes, particularly since its views have been incorporated in the draft.

Sugar rules steady

Mumbai, February 2:

Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market ruled steady with thin volatility of Rs. 2-5 on Monday despite higher local dispatches due to improve retailers demand in start of new month. Producers' continuous selling kept prices under check. *Naka* and mill tender prices were unchanged.

Stockists stayed away from building up new inventory. Freight rates were steady. In the beginning of the month, the usual higher volumes were seen and prices remained under pressure. Lack of upcountry and exports demand forced mills to depend on local markets and hence supply was ample.

Arrivals at Vashi market rose to 63-64 truckloads and local dispatches increase to 60-62 loads. The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs. 2,680-2,772 (Rs. 2,686-2,782) and M-grade was Rs. 2,786-2,946 (Rs. 2,782-2,946). *Naka* delivery rates: S-grade Rs. 2,630-2,710 (Rs. 2,630-2,710) and M-grade Rs. 2,710-2,890 (Rs. 2,710-2,890).

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Mother-son duo's agri input start-up MahaGro gains root

Use Amazon, Google, Facebook to sell soil-less potting mix in 110 cities



Krishna Kartik and his mother Girija hold the light weighing flower pots in Hyderabad on Monday PV SIVAKUMAR

Hyderabad, February 2:

Fifty-two-year-old Girija, a former lecturer in Mathematics, and her son Krishna Karthik's agricultural start-up sold 17,000 bags of odourless, soil-less mix made of coco peat, vermiculite and organic fertilisers to customers

in 110 cities across India last year. What was unique was the produce was sold and marketed through Amazon, Facebook and Google Adwords.

The mother-son duo's three-year-old start-up is called MahaGro and has just achieved breakeven this year. Girija is the chairperson of the firm and takes care of the research and development, and quality control. And her son Karthik, a commerce graduate, takes care of marketing and business activities.

Karthik, Chief Executive Officer of MahaGro, tells *BusinessLine* : "It is very easy to carry your plants at home as it is just peat. It holds water very well. You don't have lose sleep over the stains that the soil-based pots leave on the walls and flooring. Coco peat retains water very well. You can water the plants for just a couple of times in a week."

He says the organic material slowly releases fertiliser that protects the plant. "Moreover, absence of soil reduces the scope of attacks by soil-borne diseases. There's no scope for growth of weeds too," the 29-year-old says.

"We have decided not to go for the expensive marketing methods such as opening offices and appointing distributors. We have discussed our requirements with logistics players such as DTDC, ICL, depending on the strength in specific geographies," he says.

Expansion

The start-up, has a team of 13 people and a production facility at Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh. "We are setting up a facility at Nadergul in Hyderabad to bring down costs on fetching the bags. We are investing Rs. 10 lakh on the plant. The Telangana Government is giving us subsidy for the project," he explains. Besides producing potting mix, the start-up will grow organic vegetables at the facility.

‘Make in India can help expand global market for coconut products’

Minister says the campaign offers enormous prospects for the sector



MK Kundariya, Union Minister of State for Agriculture, at the 51st Asia Pacific Coconut Community meet in Kochi on Monday Vipin Chandran

Kochi, February 2:

The Centre has called upon coconut farmers to leverage the benefits of the ‘Make in India’ campaign to capture the global market for coconut products.

The Government’s campaign offers enormous prospects for Farmer Producer Organisations (FPO’s) in the coconut sector to tap the overseas markets.

Delivering the inaugural address at the 51st Asia Pacific Coconut Community meeting here on Monday, Mohanbhai Kalyanji Bhai Kundariya, Minister of State for Agriculture, pointed out the total foreign exchange earnings from this crop has gone up to Rs. 2,632 crore in 2013-14 against Rs. 2,318 crore in 2012-13. FPO’s, according to the Minister, could play the lead role in increasing the production and productivity, augmenting production of good quality planting material, better bi-product utilisation and value addition through marketing and exporting.

The Minister also urged coconut growing countries to extend a helping hand to coconut farmers in less developed countries, as over 20 million people across the world including in India depend on coconut for their livelihood.

Improved tech

Though the expertise for cultivation and product processing has improved substantially, the benefits of improved technology are not reaching down to the coconut farmers.

Efforts should be directed towards improving the farmers' share in monetary terms, he added. Uron N Salum, Executive Director, APCC, complimented the Coconut Development Board for taking up the initiative of farmer producer organisation (FPO) in India and requested all the participating countries to apply this concept as well. APCC countries produce around 55 billion nuts a year and export more than 33 million tonnes of coconut products including coir.

Speaking on the occasion, K Babu, Kerala Excise Minister, said that the commencement of neera production will boost not only coconut sector but also the State's economy, as it will help increase the growers' income.

India looks forward to the sharing of knowledge, technology and experiences with all the 18 member countries during the five-day session, TK Jose, Chairman, Coconut Development Board said.

India has 4 {+t} {+h} largest area under GM crops

New Delhi, February 2:

India ranked fourth in the area under genetically modified (GM) crops in 2014, says a report by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA).

The body estimates that total global GM-coverage touched 181.5 million hectares (m ha) last year with the addition of 6.3 m ha. In India, a further 600,000 hectares came under Bt cotton bringing the total GM acreage to 11.6 m ha, equalling transgenics' coverage in Canada.

“We have seen more adoption in developing countries since 2011. No other technology has been adopted as fast as GM in agricultural history,” said Bhagirath Choudhary, Director, ISAAA (South Asia), at the launch of the report, noting that of 28 countries to have adopted GM technology, 20 were developing nations.

Ever expanding

The US led the pack with 3 m ha added in 2014, bringing total acreage under GM-cultivation to 73.1 m ha. Brazil followed with 42.2 m ha while Argentina recorded 24.3 m ha.

In sixth-placed China, acreage decreased by 300,000 ha to 3.9 m ha. This was attributed to recent debates over safety concerns with the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture stating recently that a line had to be drawn between research and commercial production of GM food crops.

Bangladesh approved the production of Bt Brinjal last year which was grown by 120 farmers across 12 ha. “They are experimenting with late blight-resistant potato and Golden Rice under field conditions. The Government is keen to further Bt Cotton research and have collaborated with Chinese companies,” said Choudhary.

India’s cotton output, pegged at 40 million bales (of 170 kg each) in 2013-14, has often been attributed to the spread of Bt hybrids since 2002. Around 95 per cent of cotton grown domestically is GM, led by Monsanto’s Bollguard technology.

Maharashtra recently allowed open field trials of four transgenic lines in chickpea, cotton, rice and brinjal.

The climate’s changing

India’s pact with the US and the emergence of a new global agenda

Amidst the Modi-Obama atmospherics, the prospect of India ceding ground in the UN climate change talks to be held in Paris this December has been overlooked. The ‘fact sheet’ issued by the White House promises support for India’s clean energy initiatives, but does not acknowledge India’s basic stand in climate talks — the undeniable need for common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR) between the developed and developing world in view of the former’s overwhelming contribution to the stock of emissions in the atmosphere. Read along with the draft finalised at the Lima preparatory meet held in December, CBDR looks all set to be buried in Paris. CBDR was the cornerstone of the Kyoto Protocol which defined a mandatory emissions reduction regime for the advanced countries between 1998 and 2012 (to which the US, however, refused to be a signatory). To be sure, the stage for this was set at Lima. The Lima draft reads like a deceptive, last flicker, speaking of a “commitment to reaching an ambitious agreement in 2015 that reflect the principle of CBDR...in the light of different national circumstances.” The last bit can go against India, with the developed world likely to argue that India, like China, is no longer a poor country requiring

unbridled development space. The changed “circumstances” explain China’s pact with the US late last year. It remains to be seen whether India unveils an emissions reduction plan by March, as was generally agreed at Lima, cutting across the developed-developing divide. In any case, the pressure on India, the third largest annual emitter of greenhouse gases after the US and China, to agree on an emissions reduction targets will mount.

All this is no reason for India to go on the defensive. CBDR, despite its sound underlying logic, has increasingly come under challenge since 2008, with the developing world today accounting for two thirds of incremental emissions. This means that cuts by the advanced countries alone will not suffice to freeze the stock of greenhouse gases at a certain level, beyond which climate change spins out of control. The point is to substitute CBDR with a more comprehensive principle. One such is carbon budgeting, where country rights to the atmosphere are determined by both stocks and flows and responsibilities apportioned accordingly. Besides, the US must be called into question for triggering a global oil glut and asking the developing world to cut emissions at the same time.

There are some major takeaways for India from the bilateral climate agreement. India’s renewables programme, not just nuclear but also solar power, is set to receive US financial and technological support. India’s answer to climate change is geared around increasing the proportion of renewables in energy use, with the accent on private participation. While the thrust is laudable, a climate change policy should encompass other elements as well — reduced reliance on coal, promotion of mass transport over personal vehicles, and efficient water use, to state just a few. Between pacts and policies, and the ground reality, lies a huge gap that needs to be bridged.

Business Standard

[NABARD chalks out model scheme to give impetus to dairy sector in Punjab](#)

The proposed intervention would enhance milk production by 10.7 lakh litres a day

In order to give impetus to the [dairy](#) sector in Punjab, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has chalked out a model

scheme to be implemented in five districts namely Ludhiana, SBS Nagar, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur and Amritsar.

The proposed intervention envisaged in the five districts would enhance [milk production](#) by 10.7 lakh litres a day and general level credit by Rs 790.95 crore in three years. It is expected that about 1.60 lakh animals will be financed in addition to various dairy related infrastructure in these districts.

Currently, [Punjab](#) is the second highest milk producer in the country at 10.01 million metric tonnes per annum(275 lakh litres a day). The total milk production in the state is about 7.58 per cent of the total country's milk production.

According to state (Punjab) focus paper compiled by NABARD, these five districts offer tremendous potential for improvement of the dairy sector through scientific management and provision of necessary linkages. The objectives of the areas based programme (dairy) through the scheme is to enhance production and marketing of clean milk, capacity building of farmers for undertaking dairy farming and commercial activity, increase income from milk through value addition, scientific production and management of milk through backward and forward integration, better cost management, increase employment opportunities etc.

The state is also targeting to make itself a dairy state during the 12th five year plan by establishing a large number of commercial hi-tech dairy farms. Currently, the state has about 10,000 progressive dairy farmers, with farms varying in size from 10 to 500 high-yielding breeds of cows. Also, the daily production of milk by these farms is about 800,000 to one million litres.

These farmers has ventured into commercial dairy with 'Punjab Holstein' — a high-performance cross-bred cows that yield upto 10,000 litres of milk per lactation period of ten months. Currently the state has over 25 lakh cross-bred cows which is highest in the country.

According to NABARD, the state has huge potential for dairy farming. It can be gauged from the fact the total credit potential for the year 2015-16 for dairy development in the state has been estimated at Rs 3525 crore.

[Agri minister calls for global synergy in coconut farming](#)

Over 20 million people across the world depend upon coconut farming for their livelihood

Major coconut growing countries in the world should extend a helping hand to the ailing coconut farmers in less-developed countries, urged minister of state for agriculture Mohanji Kalyanji Bhai Kundariya.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the 51st Asian and Pacific Coconut Community (APCC) ministerial meeting held here today, Kundariya said coconut was being grown globally in 12.4 million hectares and the annual global production is 70-72 billion nuts. Over 20 million people across the world depend upon [coconut farming](#) for their livelihood.

The minister said, like most of the coconut growing countries in the world, in India, coconut is a small and marginal farmer's crop. "When policy makers talk and think about coconut, our aim should be the progress of these small farmers," the minister said.

In the last two decades, efforts targeting the development and research on coconut, technology for cultivation and product processing has improved substantially. But the benefits of improved technology have not been reaching to coconut farmers.

The minister praised the Coconut Development Board's (CDB) initiatives to form Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and also opined the [FPOs](#) can play a lead role in increasing production, productivity, augmenting production of good quality planting material, aggregation of the product for primary processing, better by-product utilisation and value-addition through marketing.

Kerala is the only state which had started Neera production by amending the 112-year old Abkari Act. Production of Neera would bring 10-fold increase in the grower's income.

The farmer could earn a minimum of Rs 15,000 from a tree per year. Neera sugar is being actively marketed in Indonesia and Philippines.

"The arrival of Neera would not only boost the coconut sector but also the economy of the state as a whole," said K Babu, minister for fisheries, ports and excise, Government of Kerala.

India looks forward to sharing of knowledge, technologies and experiences with all the 18 Asian and Pacific Coconut Community member countries during the five-day session, said TK Jose, chairman of CDB. [APCC](#) has felicitated three Indians for their outstanding contribution to the coconut sector.