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THE HINDU

A bunch of grapes sold for 1 million yen

A bunch of Japanese grapes has sold for a record one million yen - no trifling matter even in a country where fruit can cost a small fortune.

The record-setting bunch of 26 “Ruby Roman” grapes was the highest-priced at this year’s first auction in Kanazawa, 300 kilometres (180 miles) northwest of Tokyo, smashing the previous record of 550,000 yen set last year. Each berry weighs at least 20 grams (three-quarters of an ounce) and is the size of a ping-pong ball, according to the local board of agriculture.

Winning bidder Masayuki Hirai, head chef of the Nikko hotel in Kanazawa, told media he had been under strict orders, with local tourism chiefs eager to capitalise on a new train line to the area.

“With the opening of the Hokuriku shinkansen (bullet train) line, I was told to win the bidding at any cost,” he said. – AFP

Nadda wants import tariff increase on Chinese apple

Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda met Union Minister of State for Commerce Nirmala Sitaraman on Thursday and discussed ways of protecting farmers of Himachal Pradesh who are up against cheap Chinese apples and garlic.

He said the Chinese apples with low import tariff and garlic with zero duty were being dumped in the market.

Mr. Nadda, who hails from Himachal Pradesh, requested Ms. Sitaraman to consider including apple in the special products category so that the import tariff could be increased as per the WTO rules. He also urged her to take up with the Ministry of Home Affairs the issue of illegal smuggling of garlic from Nepal and Bangladesh.

Apple farming in six districts accounts for 6 per cent of the State’s GDP. The import tariff on the Chinese apple cannot be enhanced beyond 50 per cent under the “bound rate of duty” commitment to the WTO. To increase the tariff, apple has to be included in the “special products” category. To

create a level playing field for local farmers, negotiations should be held with the WTO by the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Nadda said.

Garlic, which cannot be imported from China, is getting smuggled from some neighbouring countries that are re-exporting it to India after importing it from China at zero duty. Garlic producers have said this “illegal” practice has ensured that Chinese garlic is available in Indian market at a cheaper rate.

This endangered the livelihood of domestic growers and flouted the ban on the fungal-invested garlic varieties from China, Mr. Nadda said.

NDDB launches mobile app for dairy farmers

On the lines of the soil health card that indicates to a farmer lack of nutrients in the field, the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) has launched a mobile phone application that will recommend the right kind of feed to cattle owners.

This will not only boost a farmer’s income but also help raise the milk yield, NDDB officials said as Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh launched the WhatsApp named “Pashu Poshan” here earlier this week.

The application, which will be available on both web and android platforms, can be accessed by registering with the INAPH portal (<http://inaph.nddb.coop>).

“We are moving towards digitisation. The application will benefit dairy farmers across 14 States who will get information about balanced and nutritious diet for their cattle,” Mr. Singh said.

Price of maize expected to be around Rs. 1,300

The Agro Market Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre (AMIBPC) of the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agri Business has said that the price of maize would remain stable during the harvest during October-November.

In a price advisory, the AMIBPC has indicated that the price of good quality maize grains will prevail around Rs.1,300 to Rs. 1,320 a quintal between October and November.

The price advisory was based on an analysis of the prices that had prevailed in the Udumalpet regulated market for 22 years.

The analysis was done by the back office of AMI and BPC in the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development Studies (CARDS), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, to provide market intelligence to farmers.

At present, maize price is prevailing at Rs. 1,340 to Rs. 1,350 per quintal in Udumalpet regulated market. At the time of harvest of kharif maize in October and November, 2015, poultry feed and industry demand will be met by local maize production in the State.

In Tamil Nadu, the maize area was 0.30 million hectares of land with a production of 1.64 million tonnes in 2013-14. Tuticorin, Virudhunagar, Dindigul, Tirunelveli, Tirupur, and Salem districts are major kharif maize producing districts in Tamil Nadu. Now, arrivals from Tamil Nadu have come to an end and arrivals from Odisha have started. Arrivals from Karnataka will start from July second week onwards. In 2013-14, maize cultivation area in India was 9.43 million hectares with production being 24.35 million tonnes. Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu are the major maize growing districts of the country, the price advisory said.

NABARD funds orchard development in Pachamalai

Saplings of mangoes and cashew to be planted under the WADI project



A tribal farmer with the cashew plant on his field at Nachilipatti village in Pachamalai.

As many as 643 acres of land had been covered under the 'WADI' Tribal Development project of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development in Pachamalai benefiting an equal number of families. Pachamalai is located on the border of Tiruchi and Salem districts. Mango and cashew orchards will be raised under this.

NABARD has taken up the project at an estimate of Rs. 8 crore, which included Rs. 6 crore grant, credit for Rs. 1 crore, and contribution of labour equivalent to Rs. 1 crore by the tribal people.

The project was being implemented in 41 villages — 16 in Tiruchi district and 25 in Salem side of the hills.

The project aims at ensuring livelihood assistance to the tribal people and planting of cashew and mango saplings on 643 acres formed a part of this component.

On each acre, 94 saplings have been raised – 54 mangoes and 40 cashew – for ensuring livelihood for the tribal people on a sustained basis, says S. Sureshkumar, Assistant General Manager, NABARD, Tiruchi, who conducted a study on the fields on Thursday.

He said that each family would get an annual income of Rs. 12 lakh, once yield commenced from these crops within a couple of years.

Excellent growth

G. Kannan, Project Director, Hand-in-Hand, the implementing agency for the six-year project inaugurated in 2014-15. “Within a year, the saplings have registered phenomenal growth, indicating the suitability of the soil for these horticultural crops,” he said. The tribal people familiar with the cultivation practices to be followed for raising these crops.

He said that the ‘VRI 3’ had been raised in the cashew area while the mango saplings included *bangnapalli*, *imampasandh*, and *malgova*.

The villages covered in Tiruchi district, included Top Sengattupatti, Puthur, Nachilipatti, Karuvankadu, N. Puthur, Boothakaal, Thannerpallam, Kambore, and Solamatthi.

On the Salem side, the project is implemented in Periyapakkalam, Gunavarai, Neyvasal, and Odaikattuputhur.

Summer showers come as a blessing to farmers



One of the tanks at Erakudi near Puliyancholai in Uppilliyapuram block has comfortable water storage this year, thanks to the summer showers.

Summer showers have come as a boon to farmers of Uppilliyapuram block, facilitating ‘kuruvai’ cultivation. Major tanks in the block have been catering to the irrigational needs of farmers and the kuruvai cultivation has been brisk in parts of the block this year.

The showers have been crucial role to stabilising the storage in at least five major tanks, according to official sources. Agriculture Department officials say that most farmers have raised ‘ADT 43’ or ‘ADT 45’ variety with duration of 110 days.

About 1,000 hectares were expected to be covered under kuruvai this year. Last year, there was a serious shortfall in kuruvai cultivation, when the area under kuruvai shrunk to just 150 hectares. Adequate quantity of seeds was available with the department, the officials said.

Storage in major tanks in and around Uppilliyapuram is comfortable for raising kurvai.

Influx of water from the tanks to the fields is quite rapid and this has forced farmers to go in for paddy cultivation as no other crop could withstand such condition, sources said.

· Most farmers have raised ‘ADT 43’ or ‘ADT 45’ variety with duration of 110 days

· *About 1,000 hectares of land likely to be covered under 'Kuruvai' in Uppiliyapuram block*

Farmers distribute milk free of cost



Milk producers distribute milk free to public in Vedasandur near Dindigul on Thursday condemning poor milk procurement by Aavin.

Members of Tamil Nadu Farmers' Association distributed hot milk free of cost to public before the taluk office condemning sharp cut in procurement of milk by Aavin and other private dairies here on Thursday.

The milk producers distributed around 100 litres of milk to the public to show their protest. They stated that Aavin as well as private dairies did not procure milk properly. With no agriculture activities, farmers have been depending on milk sale for their survival.

They also alleged that Aavin as well as private dairy firms suddenly scaled down procurement and directed them to take back the milk brought to regular procurement centres. Farmers have been incurring huge loss owing to sudden slump in procurement, they worried.

On July 3, Kannivadi Police Inspector Thiruvanandham advised farmers, who poured the milk on the street to show their protest, but not to pour milk on the road. Instead, they could distribute it to the poor to feed their children.

NABARD to promote 112 FPOs in the State

First farmer producers' company inaugurated at Sendurai



IN aid:NABARD team inspecting the products of Kurinji Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company, owned by a farmers' group, at Senthurai in Dindigul district on Thursday.

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has planned to promote 112 farmer producers' companies (FPOs) in the State. It would extend a financial assistance of Rs.10 lakh to meet the initial expenses of each FPO, said L. Sanjeevi, Assistant General Manager, NABARD.

Inaugurating the first farmer producers' company established at Sendurai in Natham block under the aegis of NABARD here on Thursday, he said that 12 FPOs will be established in the district. Three agencies had been identified for promoting the FPOs. It will offer Rs.7 lakh to agencies to meet their administrative expenses.

The NABARD will directly lend term loan or composite loan of both working capital and term loan requirement to FPOs. It will also fund for skill building exercises, guide business planning and support technological extension through exposure visits, agriculture university tie ups, expert meetings and also explore tie up with buyers and big agro companies.

Equity support was restricted to 1,000 per borrower for 1,000 borrowers. Dindigul district has one lakh active farmers.

The FPO can get loan up to Rs.1 crore without any security on the basis of their performance in future. The NABARD has proposed to promote 2,000 FPOs across the country, he added.

Deputy Director of Agriculture M.S.N. Selvaraj assured to offer godowns owned by agri-marketing societies to FPOs to stock their produce and assured them to provide buyers link. Bulk procurement of inputs and seeds will scale down costs and bulk production will help buyers lift large quantities at one place. Such measures will enhance the sale price of agri-produce. Direct marketing will be its strength. The company would be mutually beneficial to farmers and consumers, he added.

Lead Bank Manager N. John Nelson said that banks will not demand security to extend loans for these companies. FPOs can command banks to lend loan.

A group of 306 farmers including 177 women in Sendurai has joined hands to form the company in a bid to reduce cost of small millets production, said P. Poongodi, company director.

‘Green revolution-II possible only with market reforms’

At a meeting of Agriculture Ministers at Hubballi on Thursday, Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh observed that “the second green revolution can only take off with a market reforms”.

“We are looking at a best practice introduced by a State and designed for sharing with other States. It demonstrates our spirit of cooperative federalism,” Mr. Radha Mohan Singh said.

As the Union government moves towards setting up a seamless and unified national agriculture market, the Minister observed that the Karnataka model will be scaled up in a year. A common e-platform will be set up to which, initially, 585 APMCs will be linked. The Union government will provide free software to States. In addition, a grant of up to Rs. 30 lakh per mandi will be given as a one-time measure for equipment and infrastructure, he said.

The market reforms encourage a transparent price-discovery system with a choice to farmers to pick a market that gives the best price for their produce. This will also help cut wastages due to inefficient and antiquated marketing practices.

25 Wi-Fi hotspots for three districts

As many as twenty five places in the three districts of Dharwad, Gadag and Haveri, including campuses of major educational institutions, would be getting Wi-Fi hotspots in the coming months.

Addressing presspersons here recently, General Manager of Dharwad Telecom District of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) Vivek Jaiswal, said that initially the Wi-Fi hotspots would be created at Old Bus Station in Hubballi, Karnatak University and University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad.

“While University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, has already given its consent for setting up the Wi-Fi zone, it will take some time as it needs to get necessary permissions from the State government for bearing the expenses for the facility for the students,” Mr. Vivek said. He clarified that while the university or the educational institutions would have to pay for the facility, BSNL would invest on its own to set up the facility at public places.

“We have applied to the concerned authorities for setting up Wi-Fi zone at Old Bus Station at Hubballi. It may take three-four months for launching the facility”, he said, adding that subsequently the facility would be created at other identified places including High Court of Karnataka at Dharwad in phased manner.

Gram Panchayats

He said that under the Digital India programme, BSNL, Dharwad, would be connecting 441 gram panchayats in the three districts to its operation by laying 1,000 km of Optical Fibre Cable. Already 26 gram panchayats had been commissioned under the programme and the remaining work would be completed by September 2015, he said.

Mobile app for dairy farmers

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Pre-kharif awareness workshop from Monday

A two-day pre-kharif awareness programme on soil, crops and animal health management for sustainable production will be held at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra-Kannur (KVK) at Panniyur here from July 13.

Heavy erosion of soil during monsoon along with depletion of plant nutrients from the soil results in poor crop health, leading to incidence of pests and diseases, mainly due to the negligence in adoption of scientific technologies at appropriate time, a press release issued by the KVK here on Thursday said. P.K. Sreemathy, MP, will inaugurate the workshop.

Experts from the Kerala Agricultural University, Departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development, and Soil Conservation would be attending the workshop, the release said

Farmers' Day celebrations

Agriculture festival in Kannur

A 11-day South Indian Agri Fest to be held at the Kannur police maidan from August 16 will be the highlight of the Farmers' Day celebrations this year.

Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan unveiled a logo of the festival here on Thursday. The event includes an agriculture exhibition, pageantry, magic show, and cultural programmes.

Financial literacy programme

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) will organise a financial literacy programme as part of its 34th Foundation Day celebrations at P. Meenakshipatti village in Chellampatti block on July 10.

The objective of the programme, according to a press release, is to improve the financial literacy of the poor and vulnerable sections of society and facilitate access to financial services and social security schemes. Bankers, panchayat leaders, non-governmental organisations and farmers will participate in the programme.

BSNL to connect villages with high-speed Internet

Villages in Mysuru and Chamarajanagar districts are bracing up for high-speed internet as part of the Digital India initiative of the government.

BSNL, one of the key players in the initiative, is networking villages in Mysuru and Chamarajanagar with optical fibre cables.

BSNL has taken up the extensive laying of optical fibre cables as part of the National Optic Fibre Network to provide high-speed internet to the rural hinterland.

T.V. Venkatram, Principal General Manager Telecom, Mysuru Telecom District, said in a release that BSNL Mysuru has planned to lay about 650 kms of optical fibre cables in the two districts to provide high-speed internet to 355 gram panchayats.

“Work has been taken up on a top priority basis and already about 620 kms of optical fibre cables have been laid,” said Mr. Venkatram. So far, 110 gram panchayats in Chamarajanagar and 108 gram panchayats in Mysuru have been tested and are ready with high-speed connectivity, he added.

This would ensure the successful roll-out of e-governance projects of the government. In addition, various government departments and agencies can use this network to provide public services to the citizens who can avail them. Information related to agriculture, weather, market etc would be online.

BSNL said that applications in tele-medicines, tele-education, e-commerce, e-banking etc. would be within the reach of citizens. “Connectivity to rural areas will propel the growth of mobile connectivity and extend services like m-commerce, m-banking etc. to bridge the digital divide between urban and rural India,” said Mr. Venkatram.

Encroachments on 1,253 tanks cleared, says DC



The Deputy Commissioner has also asked officials to fence all tanks in the district.

Deputy Commissioner of Mysuru Shikha has said that the district administration had cleared encroachments over 1,253 tanks in the district and had handed over the tanks to the respective departments. She instructed the Minor Irrigation, Major Irrigation Departments and gram panchayats to take all necessary steps to fence the tanks and protect them.

Chairing a revenue officers meeting here on Wednesday, Ms. Shikha also instructed the departments to clear silt from the tanks and asked the Forest Department (social forestry) to fence all the tanks in the district.

The DC instructed the officials of the agriculture, horticulture, veterinary and other line departments to participate in “Kandaya Adalat” meetings to be held in taluks and discuss farmers’ problems in such meetings and find suitable. If the problems are serious, bring it to the notice of the district administration, she told officials.

Ms. Shikha asked the officials of the Muzarai Department to organise mass marriages at the taluk-level making use of community halls. This is to help farmers who would otherwise avail loans from banks and private institutions to marry off their sons and daughters.

She also called upon the voluntary organisations and members of Self Help Groups to create awareness against lavish expenditure on marriages and promote mass marriages. There are over 450 burial grounds in the district and the DC asked the Tahasildars and other officials to take steps that people belonging to castes would make use of the burial grounds.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Archana, Joint Director of Agriculture M. Mahanteshappa were present.

Farmers’ meeting today

To boost the morale of the farmers, the Mysuru Zilla Panchayat will organise a farmers’ meeting on Friday where farmers will narrate their success stories and will motivate others to overcome the financial crisis.

Senior officials of the agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, fisheries and few other line departments would explain the various schemes of the government to help the farmers to carry out agriculture and allied occupations with the aid of the government.

The zilla panchayat, with the help of the Agriculture Department, had identified over 20 farmers who have been successful in agriculture and they had been invited.

The farmers have been asked to explain how they overcome the financial crisis. Market strategy, methods of cultivation, avoiding private financiers and using financial aid of banks and co-operative societies are some of the issues to be explained.

Progressive farmers would explain various new techniques of cultivation making use of the recent innovations and agriculture implements.

Officials of nationalised banks and co-operative institutions will also take part in the meeting and explain credit facilities to farmers threadbare.

Adopt water conservation techniques to increase yield, Collector tells farmers

Requests them to avail subsidy for installing drip irrigation equipment



Collector R. Nanthagopal releases a technical handbook for farmers in Vellore on Thursday. R. Jayasundar (second from left), Joint Director of Agriculture, and S.S. Ponnu, Deputy Director of Horticulture, are in the picture.

Vellore Collector R. Nanthagopal has appealed to the horticulturists to adopt water conservation measures such as drip irrigation and construction of farm ponds in order to increase the yield.

Inaugurating a 2-day district level seminar on horticulture organised jointly by the Department of Horticulture and Plantation Crops under the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) here on Thursday, Mr.

Nanthagopal said that horticulture crops have been cultivated on 32,000 hectares, constituting 18 per cent of the cultivation area in Vellore district.

Of this, mango alone is being cultivated on 14,800 hectares. Other crops under cultivation include fruit crops such as guava, banana and sapota, vegetables such as 'Ilavambadi' brinjal (commonly known as 'mullu kathirikka') and flower crops.

The Collector said that the government was implementing various schemes such as NHM, National Herbal Movement, National Bamboo Movement, National Agricultural Development Programme and National Watershed Development Scheme in order to enable the farmers to double the yield and earn profits. Considering the drought conditions in the district, the horticulture farmers should adopt water conservation measures such as drip irrigation in the cultivation of horticultural crops in order to increase the yield and earn profits. They should construct farm ponds in order to hold the rain water and enable the raising of the groundwater table.

Mr. Nanthagopal said that the small and marginal horticulture farmers are eligible for 100 per cent subsidy for installation of drip irrigation equipment, while other farmers are eligible for a 75 per cent subsidy. He requested the farmers to avail of the subsidy and install drip irrigation equipment. The Collector also released a technical handbook for farmers.

M. Pandian, Professor and Head, Tamil Nadu Agriculture University Research Station, Virinjipuram, Vellore, gave a technical talk on the cultivation methods.

R. Jayasundar, Joint Director of Agriculture, R. Ramakrishnan, Personal Assistant (Agriculture) to the Collector, government officials, horticulturists and scientists of the TNAU participated in the programme. S.S. Ponnu, Deputy Director of Horticulture (in charge) welcomed the gathering.

Financial awareness programme today

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) and Srinivasan Services Trust jointly organise financial awareness programme in Padavedu on Friday in view of the 34th anniversary of Nabard.

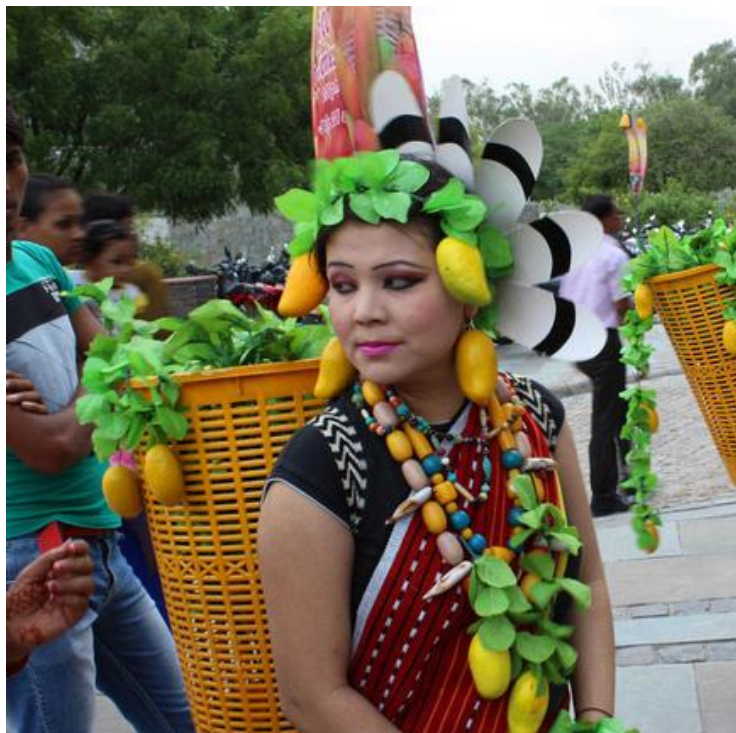
Tamil Nadu regional office of Nabard organises 30 such district level programmes in 29 districts of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry Union Territory in view of the anniversary.

The aim of the programme is to create financial awareness among the marginalised sections of the people.

Feast on the MANGO



Slurp:Delicious mangoes and a cultural extravaganza.Photos: Swati Daftuar; Erum Gour



Raw, ripe, sweet, juicy and pickled — do you like them all? Here's a festival to celebrate our love for mangoes!

The aroma of a few mangoes in the fruit bowl at home is deliciously distracting. Imagine then, a roomful of over 500 varieties of the king of fruits, all perfectly ripe with the promise of that exotic sweetness that has made the mango impossible to resist. Heavenly, isn't it?

This year's instalment of the Mango Festival, which was held during July 3–5, is its 27th one, and like its predecessors, brings to the table a

fascinating display of the fruit. The festival first began in 1988, organised by Delhi Tourism, and was held in an orchard in Saharanpur. This year, the three-day festival was held in Dilli Haat, Janakpuri in New Delhi. When it first began, the festival aimed to provide the agro and food processing industries a chance to showcase their work, and encourage exports. Today, it is also attended by hundreds of people looking to know more about their beloved fruit.

Think of all the different ways in which we eat them — the refreshing *aam panna* , the tangy, raw mangoes plucked straight from the tree, the ripe, sweet yellow fruits, the spicy pickle! It is this diversity and range that the Mango festival in Delhi celebrates, and it also explains its history, medicinal usage and cultural relevance.

Fascinating display

Today, there are approximately 1,365 varieties of mangoes available in the world, and over 1,000 of them are found in India. Some are as small as a grape, and some others can weigh over 2.5kg.

This sheer range makes the exhibition of both rare and commercially popular mangoes the festival's prime attraction. A large and growing number of traditional mango growers sit behind large tables in a long exhibition hall, and the table holds little baskets with mangoes neatly labelled. It's a fascinating sight, and the names of the varieties are in themselves both amusing and interesting to learn. For example, the display by the Bihar Agricultural University from Sabour holds varieties like the Fazli, Alfazli, Kesar, Langra and Police, while the display by Mohammad Saeed Siboo from Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh, boasts of names like Mallika and Makkhan. Some of the other interesting names include Motichoor, Gulab Jamun, Kela Mishri and Rasgulla — names of Indian sweets which have been adopted by the mango growers.

The display hall also holds a very impressive display of trophies won by mango pickle makers in competitions over the years, as well as other products like *aam papads* (candied sheets of sweet/sour mango pulp) and cuttings of the mango trees themselves.

Outside the display hall, activities such as slogan writing competitions, mango eating contests for women, a magic show and a mango quiz were held. Large stalls selling everything from fresh mango juices and shakes to little packets of mango candy were also there.

We all have our special mango memories — that time we ate an entire crateful and didn't regret it, never mind the stomach ache, or that time when we climbed trees to get to the sweetest looking fruit. We have chatted over glasses of chilled *aam pannas* and given ourselves toothache biting into raw but delicious *ambis*. The festival celebrates these memories, reminds us how precious they are, and gives us new ones to keep.

Mango in my mind

Did you know that the mango has been cultivated by humans for over 4,000 years and is believed to be indigenous to the Indian subcontinent? It's been mentioned in Sanskrit literature under the name "amra", and the Rig Veda calls it "saha". The Ramayana mentions mangoes too, and the Mughal Emperor Akbar planted an orchard of 1,00,000 mango trees. It was Akbar who called the mango "King of Fruits".

Monsoon active in Kerala

IMD forecasts widespread rainfall during next five days

Just when you thought the southwest monsoon was playing truant, the Meteorological Department has allayed such fears, clarifying that the seasonal rainfall has entered an active phase in Kerala.

This forecast comes even as the rainfall recorded from June 1 to July 8 is 30 per cent deficient. "For the next five days, the State is likely to witness widespread rainfall. Monsoon has revived from Thursday after remaining dormant for almost a week," S. Sudevan, scientist, Meteorological Centre, Thiruvananthapuram (Indian Meteorological Department), told *The Hindu*.

Team inspects Veterinary College



Checking:Members of Veterinary Council of India inspecting the library of Veterinary College and Research Institute at Ramayyanpatti near Tirunelveli on Thursday.

A team of experts nominated by the Veterinary Council of India inspected the general facilities available at the Veterinary College and Research Institute, Tirunelveli on Thursday.

The team inspected the fourth year departments – Veterinary Gynaecology and Obstetrics, Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Surgery and Radiology and also inspected the departments established over the past three years and took stock of facilities available in departments of Animal nutrition, instructional livestock farm complex, library science , Animal genetics and breeding, livestock Production Management, Livestock Products Technology, Teaching Veterinary Clinical complex, Veterinary Anatomy and Histology, Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Extension, Veterinary Microbiology, Veterinary Parasitology, Veterinary Pathology, Veterinary Pharmacology and Toxicology, Veterinary Physiology and Biochemistry, Veterinary Public Health and Epidemiology. The inspection will continue, a statement said.

The team comprised G.S.Manohar, Professor, Department of Veterinary Parasitology, College of Veterinary and Animal Science, Bikaner, Rajasthan, H.A. Upendra, Director, Institute of Wildlife Veterinary Research and Coordinator, Wildlife, Veterinary College, Hebbal, Bangalore, Karnataka and A.H. Ahmad, Professor, Department of Pharmacology, College of Veterinary Science, Pantnagar, Uttarakhand.

The team interacted with S. Prathaban, Dean of the Institute and staff members.

Intake of 40

The VCRI, Tirunelveli, is functioning from 2012and has an intake of 40 students per year.

200 noodle variants under Gujarat food authority scanner

Manufactures of the instant noodle brands would be sent notices for withdrawal, if their products do not conform with set standards, said FDCA.



The Gujarat food and drugs authority, which launched a massive drive to check the food safety standards of packaged products after lead and monosodium glutamate (MSG) were found beyond permissible limits in the samples of Nestle's [Maggi](#), has sent to laboratories as many as 200 variants of more than 20 instant noodle brands and the results would likely be disclosed in a week.

The manufactures of the instant noodle brands would be sent notices for withdrawal, if their products do not conform with the set standards, said the Food and Drugs Control Administration (FDCA).

However, the manufacturers of all top brands as well as locally made ice-creams and soft drinks would only get notices to lift the safety standards from the FDCA, if their products fail the tests. It is likely that by the time results would be out, the batch from which samples were taken might be sold out in the market.

“Two hundred samples of variants of more than 20 instant noodle brands have been taken and sent for multiple tests, including MSG and lead, to laboratories located at Vadodara, Rajkot and Bhuj,” said Dr H G Koshiya, the commissioner of FDCA.

Five exotic Mango recipes you must try this summer

Rich in sweetness, flavour and succulent texture, we bring 5 exotic mango dishes for you.



Rich in sweetness, flavour and succulent texture, we bring 5 exotic mango dishes for you.

#1 Sticky Rice with Fresh Mango

By Masterchef Chef Kanchit Vong Vi Chai, Dao

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups uncooked short-grain white rice
- 2 cups water
- 1 1/2 cups coconut milk
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon tapioca starch
- 3 mangos, peeled and sliced
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

Method

1. Combine the rice and water in a saucepan; bring to a boil; cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer until water is absorbed, 15 to 20 minutes.
2. While the rice cooks, mix together 1 1/2 cups coconut milk, 1 cup sugar, and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a saucepan over medium heat; bring to a boil; remove from heat and set aside. Stir the cooked rice into the coconut milk mixture; cover. Allow to cool for 1 hour.

3. Make a sauce by mixing together 1/2 cup coconut milk, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and the tapioca starch in a saucepan; bring to a boil.

4. Place the sticky rice on a serving dish. Arrange the mangos on top of the rice. Pour the sauce over the mangos and rice. Sprinkle with sesame seeds

#2 Pan Seared Chicken with Caramelized Mango

By Sagar Anand, Sous Chef, Lodi – The Garden Restaurant

Mango jalapeño salsa

2/3 cup diced peeled ripe mango
2 tablespoons minced red onion
1 tablespoon minced seeded jalapeño pepper
1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh cilantro
1 1/2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
Salt & pepper to taste

Chicken

2 skinless, boneless chicken breast
1 teaspoon raw mango purée
Salt & pepper to taste

Caramelised mango

1 mango slice
1 teaspoon sugar

Method

1. To prepare salsa, combine first 6 ingredients. Cover; refrigerate 30 minutes.
2. To prepare chicken, place each chicken breast marinate it with raw mango purée, salt & pepper.
3. Place chicken on a grill rack, grill 3 minutes on each side or until done.
4. Caramelize mango in a non stick pan with some sugar.
5. Serve chicken on the bed of cracked potato with caramelised mango. Pour mango jalapeño salsa over the chicken to the plate.

#3 Mango Cheese Cake

By Anil Kumar, Executive Pastry Chef
Le Meridien Gurgaon



Mango Cheese cake

Ingredients

Cream Cheese – 500 gm
Whole Egg – 3nos
Sugar – 140 gms
Sour Cream – 75 gms
Heavy Cream – 40 gms
Vanilla – 1 stick
Mango Puree – 200 gms
Fresh Mango – 175 gms

Method

For the base

- 1) Crumble the cookie with a rolling pin
- 2) Add melted butter & honey in a bowl. Mix well to make a base.
3. Set aside.

For cheese cake base

1. Beat the cream cheese and sugar and ensure it is folded in well.
2. Add the eggs into the mixture slowly in order to get a smooth and fluffy mixture.
3. Add the vanilla, sour cream and heavy cream to the mixture.

4. Finally add Mango puree and Fresh mango that has been chopped into small pieces.
5. Pour the mixture into the prepared cake base.
6. Bake the mixture in the oven at 150 degree Celsius for a period of 1 hour.
7. Cool down once out of the oven
8. Decorate with more pieces of fresh mango and chocolates and serve slightly chilled.

#4 Smoked Mango Salad

At S18, Radisson Blu, MBD Hotel, Noida



Ingredients

Chicken roasted – 200 gms
Mango dice – 150 gms
Asparagus spears – 70 gms
Olive oil – 50 ml
Dijon Mustard – 10 gms
White wine vinegar – 30 ml

Sea Salt – 5 gms
Crushed Black pepper – 2 gms
Dill – 5 gm

Method

1. Mix the oil, vinegar, mustard, black pepper to form a dressing.
2. Chop dill and add to the dressing.
3. In a salad bowl, mix mango, asparagus and roasted chicken.
4. Drizzle the dressing and sprinkle some sea salt to taste.
5. Serve chilled.

#5 Mango Fruit Cake

At The Grand, New Delhi

A soft and moist cake made with vanilla sponge, whipped fresh dairy cream and fresh diced mangos, garnished with Mango puree, scoop of fresh mango and white chocolate.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Fund to fight climate change will be routed via Nabard



Accreditation to the Nabard, means that the national financial institution will act as a channel through which the GCF will deploy its resources in India.

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) on Thursday got an accreditation from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) - a global multilateral fund that is meant to assist developing and poor countries in taking up their respective mitigation and adaptation measures to fight climate change.

Accreditation to the Nabard, means that the national financial institution will act as a channel through which the GCF will deploy its resources in India. It also makes the bank eligible to identify communities and areas which are most vulnerable to climate change and submit proposals to the Fund for financial support.

The funding will support a range of activities including installation of renewable (solar, wind and bio-mass) energy, enabling farmers to grow drought-resistant crops and reducing deforestation.

Besides Nabard, the GCF has, so far, accredited 19 other institutions from across the globe. It includes the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Germany-based Deutsche Bank AG, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Agence Francaise de Developpement (AFD) of France.

Seven of these institutions had got their accreditation in March while the other 13 entities including Nabard got it during the GCF board meeting at Songdo in South Korea on Thursday.



Institutions which were accredited in March have already started submitting initial project ideas and concept notes. Of these, nine proposals from nine different countries, including Thailand, Mali, Ethiopia and Rwanda, have been finalized.

"Seven months ago we invited institutions for the first time to become partners with us. Today, close to 100 well-established institutions from around the world are working towards becoming GCF accredited entities", said Hela Cheikhrouhou, executive director, GCF.

"We have added to this momentum by boosting our number of accredited entities to 20", she said while announcing the decision of the board.

Scientists to combat peafowl menace

Following the peafowl menace in agricultural fields of Coimbatore, the district forest officials have requested P Balasubramanian, a principal scientist from Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History at Anaikatti to conduct a detailed project about it. The scientist and his research scholar started the project from Perianaickenpalayam and Karamadai area.

They said they would submit the report to the forest department by the end of September and would find a solution on how to control the situation.

M Senthil Kumar, district forest officer, Coimbatore forest division, said that crop was damaged by peafowl in Kalapatti, Sulur, Thondamuthur, Karamadai, Madukkarai and a few other areas in the forest division. The peafowls eat up freshly sown seeds. "We requested the scientist to conduct a detailed project to control the peafowl menace. The forest department will provide fund for the project," said Senthil Kumar.

"We started the project two weeks ago at Perianaickenpalayam and Karamadai. We met farmers and spoke to them in length about the problem. The project is named assessment of conflicts between peafowl and farmers in Coimbatore'," said principal scientist Balasubramanian. He said he had planned to collect details about the peafowl population, family size and their food habits as well as nesting locations.

A K Karthikeyan, a farmer from Appachigoundenpathi village near Madukkarai, said the peafowl damaged tomato, chili and maize crops. "Though we have resorted to different techniques to chase the birds away, nothing seem to work," said Karthikeyan.

Senthil Kumar said some of the farmers used dogs to chase away the birds away from the fields. A few of them installed instrument to emit noises to scare the birds away.

In January 2015, a farmer P Thirumurthy, 40, from Chennimalai in Erode was arrested by the forest officials for poisoning ten peafowl. The birds consumed grains mixed with poisonous substances. The farmer decided to put poison on his crop after his paddy crop was completely destroyed by peafowl. In May 2015, five peafowl were found dead in an agricultural field at Kalapatti in the city and postmortem revealed that the birds were poisoned.

The peacock being the national bird of India, is protected under Section 51 (1-A) of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 and its hunting and killing is strictly prohibited.

[Women of self-help group open food stall](#)

A self-help group (SHG) with the help of Madurai corporation opened a stall on Friday for selling health drinks and food varieties at Yaanaikkal in Simmakkal in the city.

Amma Subsidized Natural Drinks and Millet Food Products received an overwhelming response from residents on the first day. Vegetable soups, herbal juices, ready-to-make dosa dough, snack including ragi murukku, ragi pakkoda and millets cookies are available at the stall.

The corporation also distributed free nilavembu decoction, herbal extract that helps in preventing diseases like dengue, at the centre. More such stalls will be opened depending on the success of the stall, said corporation officials.

The women members of the SHG were trained under various agencies before they set up the stall. "We recently underwent training on baking, manufacturing food products using millets and preparation of recipes. It was provided by the corporation under National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM), Agricultural College and other agencies", said a woman from the federation.

There are 26 SHG federation in the city that is run under NULM, and each federation has 10 SHGs. The corporation is planning to expand the initiative. "We will open more such stalls at all four zonal office of Madurai corporation, if the stall prove to be successful. It can be set up on a low budget", said the city mayor V V Rajan Chellappa.

BusinessLine

Now, an e-nose to rate jasmine fragrance

The Department of Floriculture at the Farm Varsity here is set to transform fragrance testing of the jasmine flower using electronic nose technology.

Developed jointly by C-DAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing), Kolkata and the Department of Floriculture, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, this handheld electronic device, will help assess quality of the fresh flower, determine harvesting time for extraction, assess industrial quality and identify ideal concrete extraction stage.

How it works

The extract of jasmine flower, called concrete, is highly valuable for perfume, confectionery cosmetics and toiletry industries.

"The fragrance assessment has more or less been subjective until now. The analysis was (and is still being) done using GCMS (Gas Chromatography and Mass Spectrography) instruments. This not only requires technically trained hands to operate the instrument, but is time consuming and expensive. The instrument costs around Rs. 40 lakh and it takes about 5 hours to complete assessment of a sample," M Kannan, Professor and Head of the Department, explains.

E-Nose, therefore, is expected to be a breakthrough. It is a sensor-aided handheld device with five sensors each – to assess the quality of fresh flowers and for identifying the compounds in concrete. The sampling time is less than a minute (40 seconds), said Xavier Alex Isac, a research scholar.

The Varsity has installed the new assessment tool at NC Aeromatics, Mettupalayam and at the Flower Market in Sathyamangalam.

The three-year project is nearing completion and we are waiting to get the feedback from the users, said KR Rajadurai, Assistant Professor, Department of Floriculture, TNAU.

Five sensors

Kannan said that the selection of sensors itself was a huge process. “We short-listed five sensors, such that each will respond to one compound and give the aroma index. Jasmine contains 120 compounds of which only 10 are prominent,” he said.

Asked how the flowers are priced, he said, “until now, it was done subjective. With the aroma index, the growers will be able to get better rates .”

Madurai Gundu Malli, which incidentally was accorded GI status in 2012, has the best fragrance followed by flowers from Sankarankoil and Sathyamangalam, Varsity experts said.

E-Nose is a sensor-aided handheld device with five sensors each – to assess the quality of fresh flowers . The sampling time is about 40 seconds

Cotton farmers, seed firms wait for monsoon to revive

Prolonged dry spell after initial showers causing concern; slack sales in North



Cotton farmers and seed firms are waiting anxiously to see if the monsoon will revive in the next few days.

A long dry spell after the initial showers last month is causing concern, reminding farmers of similar spells that spoiled their party last year.

Loss in output

“We were so hopeful at the beginning of the season. But now we are a bit worried. The crop needs a crucial shower in the next 4-5 days. Any delay will result in a production loss of 60-70 per cent,” Rama Rao, a farmer in Warangal said.

Cottonseed firms report slack sales in the North, particularly in Punjab and Haryana, where farmers shifted to pulses and paddy following not so encouraging returns.

“Punjab and Haryana comprise about 20-25 per cent of the 4.50-4.80 lakh cottonseed market in the country. We may be losing about 15-20 per cent of this to other crops,” a seed industry expert told *BusinessLine*. “Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka too reported lower sales so far,” he added.

Sales figure

However, the key markets of Maharashtra, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh fared much better in sales than last year. Niranjan Kumar, a leader of Seedsmen Association, and Chief Executive Officer of Garc Seeds Private Limited, said that it will take another week or two to get clarity on the seed consumption patterns.

“The seed firms sold much more than the as-on-date average sales in Maharashtra and Telangana. By now, the industry would have registered 50 per cent of the season’s sale. They sold 90 per cent of it so far,” he said.

The industry sold about 5.30 crore packets (of 450 grams each) last year as against the normal demand of 4.50 crore packets due to long dry spells that forced farmers to buy seeds more than once. “The industry must have sold 30-40 lakh packets on this count last year. If monsoon fares well, you can’t see this additional sales,” P Satish Kumar, former President of Seedsmen Association, said.

“If there are no rains in the next few days, the farmers will suffer. They will have to spend afresh on seeds and other inputs. Even if they are successful in the second instance, they would have lost a crucial growth phase,” Sanjeeva Reddy, a leader of CPM-affiliated Rythu Sangham, pointed out.

Soyabean industry wants hike in customs duty on edible oils

The Soyabean Processors Association of India (SOPA) has requested Finance Minister Arun Jaitley to increase customs duty on edible oil imports to protect domestic interests, farmers, with global prices at five-year lows. The association pitched for an increase in customs duty to 25 per cent on crude edible oil and 30 per cent on refined varieties.

“Soyabean industry and trade is greatly concerned at the burgeoning edible oil imports of over 11 million tonnes (mt) annually with an import over Rs. 65,000 crore ... severely hurting the local producers and farmers,” said a note addressed to Jaitley, dated July 8. Signed by the association’s Chairman Davish Jain, the note estimates soyabean imports to surge to 3 mt in the 2014-15 oil year, against domestic soya oil production of 1.6 mt.


The Centre had raised import duty of crude and refined edible oil by 5 per cent each last December. However, price of soya oil slid 18.2 per cent between January and July. Soyameal exports fell 71.5 per cent this year, from 2.05 mt in 2013-14 to 0.58 mt between October and June. As of July 6, average local wholesale price of crude soyabean oil was Rs. 57,750/tonne (\$911.67), while globally the commodity was pegged at \$730/tonne.

“...this is directly affecting the farmers and industry that have to compete with cheap imported oil,” it added.

Ragi acreage set to expand on policy push

Health-conscious consumers, value-added products seen boosting consumption

Ragi report card							
	1953-56	1965-66	1975-76	1985-86	1995-96	2005-06	2011-12
Area (ha)	23.07	26.36	26.10	24.01	17.74	15.34	11.76
Production (in lakh tonnes)	18.46	11.27	27.97	25.18	25.01	22.54	19.29
Productivity (kg/ha)	800	492	1,094	1,049	1,410	1,534	1,641



Apart from the rising awareness of nutritive benefits, the policy push being given by Karnataka – the largest ragi producing State – is set to see the acreage under finger millet (ragi) grow considerably in the years to come.

Higher MSP

The Karnataka government has procured over one lakh tonnes of ragi at Rs. 2,000 a quintal last year (includes a bonus of Rs. 450 over the MSP of Rs. 1,550 announced by Centre for 2014-15) for public distribution under the Annabhagya Scheme in southern districts, the main growing regions of the cereal.

For the kharif 2015-16, the Centre has announced a Rs. 100 increase in MSP at Rs. 1,650, while Karnataka is yet to spell out its procurement target and the support price.

However, the expectation is that procurement and the support price would be higher than last year.

Ragi is a staple food in the southern States where it is largely consumed in the form of porridge, bread and dumplings or balls along with curry. This finger millet is largely grown as main crop and also as inter-crop in the State, largely under rain-fed conditions.

“The message of assured procurement has gone to the farmers and we expect the acreages to increase to around 10 lakh hectares (lh) in a year or two from the current 7 lh,” said TN Prakash Kammaradi, Chairman of the Karnataka Agricultural Price Commission.

Dwindling area

Karnataka accounts for over two-thirds of the country’s total produce, followed by Uttarakhand, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

The acreage under ragi in Karnataka, which stood at 10 lh about 15 years ago, had dwindled to between 6 and 7 lh. “We hope the policy push being provided through a higher support price would bring back the farmers to ragi in the years to come,” Prakash added.

Farm mechanisation

Also the proposed initiative for introducing mechanisation, especially the harvest reapers, could provide a fillip to the cultivation. “Harvesting is a labourious process and accounts for a major part of the cost of cultivation. With the development of ragi reapers, it is expected that the cost of cultivation is set to come down,” Prakash said adding that the commission is recommending subsidising such ragi reapers.

Farm varsity initiatives

Effective procurement and assured price could help wean farmers growing other commodities to ragi.

“Tomato growers in Kolar and Chikaballapur districts could easily be brought back to cultivation of ragi, which consumes less water,” said P Ravi Shankar, Genetist at University of Agriculture Sciences, Bengaluru.

Incidentally, in these districts water tables have dropped considerably in the past few years due to over exploitation and farmers have been facing gluts in tomatoes year-after-year.

The UAS-Bengaluru recently released a ragi variety that’s white in colour for cultivation this year, although the State varietal release committee is yet to notify it. The white variety is targeted at bakers and makers of biscuits, vermicilli, pasta and cereal-based snacks and could help in attracting new set of consumers.

The UAS-Bengaluru, including its centre in Mandya, has distributed about 30 kg of white ragi seeds this year, which should result in coverage of about 250 acres.

“We expect the white ragi to see a jump in coming years on rise in awareness,” said Ravishankar. White ragi has the potential to yield about 12-15 quintals under irrigation, while in the rain-fed areas, it is about 7-8 quintals.

Corporates chip in

Ragi has seen a new-found demand in recent years with health-conscious consumers waking up to the nutritional benefits of the cereal even as lifestyle diseases are on the rise.

With its high calcium, protein and fibre content, compared to other cereals such as wheat and rice, ragi has found a favour even among biscuit makers including companies such as Britannia, breakfast cereal makers Kottaram Agro Foods Pvt Ltd and manufacturers of ready to eat mixes such as MTR Foods and Maiyas.

The rising awareness of the nutritional benefits of ragi and development of value added products – be it in the form of biscuits or cakes, malt and even porridge mix is driving the consumption of such small millets.

Prashant Parameswaran, managing director of Kottaram Agro Foods Pvt Ltd, which markets ragi-based products under the Soulfull brand, said the ragi-based products have been resonating well with the consumers even as the company targets newer markets in western part of the country mainly Mumbai.

“We had apprehensions when we launched the products last year, but the consumer response has been phenomenal,” he added. Soulfull, which has innovative products such as ragi chocofills and ragi vanilla fills and banana flakes among others has recently launched even a Rs. 10 pack in a bid to boost consumption targeting school children.

Downtrend to continue in MCX crude oil

BL Research Bureau:

The crude oil futures contract traded on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) has tumbled about 8 per cent in the past week. The contract has declined below a key trend-line as well as the 100-day moving average support at Rs. 3,480 a barrel during this fall. It is currently trading at Rs. 3,355. The contract has been range-bound between Rs. 3,200 and Rs. 3,400 since Tuesday and the overall outlook is bearish. However, an intermediate bounce to test the key resistances at Rs. 3,425, Rs. 3,480 and Rs. 3,500 cannot be ruled out. Such rallies could attract fresh sellers coming into the market. A fall to Rs. 3,160 which is the immediate key support level looks likely. A further break below this support can see the downtrend extending to Rs. 3,000 levels.

Traders can go short at current levels. Stop-loss can be kept at Rs. 3,490 for the target of Rs. 3,170. Rallies to Rs. 3,425 can also be used to accumulate short positions.

The downside pressure will ease only on a strong breach above Rs. 3,500. The next target will be Rs. 3,700.

MCX-Natural Gas: After oscillating around Rs. 180 per mmBtu for a while, the contract has declined sharply in the past week. During this fall the contract has broken below a key trend-line support at Rs.174. It is currently trading near Rs. 172. Inability to rally above Rs. 174 from current levels could increase the danger for the contract to fall further to Rs. 164 and Rs. 160 in the coming days. On the charts, the bias is bearish and this fall looks imminent. Traders can go short with a stop-loss at Rs. 176 for the target of Rs.165.

Note: The recommendations are based on technical analysis. There is a risk of loss in trading.