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# THE HINDU

**Native mango varieties get a helping hand**



A Kilichundan mango tree at the Government Agricultural Farm, Kottukkal in Kollam, sports a rich crop of mangoes.— Photo C. Suresh Kumar

In the past, trees of native mango varieties used to be lavishly seen almost everywhere in Kerala. In the southern parts of the State such varieties that tempted even jaded palates included Karpooram, Kilichundan, Chandrakaran, Thali, Preyoor, Moovandan, Mylapore, Kotturkonam, Polachira, and Kappa.

But later on preponderance and preference of introduced and hybrid mango varieties led to even famous native varieties getting driven to the verge of

extinction. This led to such mango trees becoming the first victims to most development activities.

Of late, due to fears over chemically treated imported mangoes flooding the markets during season, there is a renewed demand for the native varieties. But these are not easily available because of a dearth of trees.

The Government Agricultural Farm at Kottukkal, near Anchal in Kollam, district is making a strong intervention to protect and propagate such varieties. Farm superintendent N. Chandrashekarar told *The Hindu* that the demand for saplings of native mango varieties among farmers and others are steadily picking up.

The farm has over 300 trees of about a dozen native varieties meant exclusively for propagation through grafting.

Mr. Chandrashekarar said that for various reasons the demand was very high for hybrid varieties than even the introduced varieties and topping the demand list is the H-151 variety, a cross between Neelam and Kalapadi developed by the District Agricultural Farm at Taliparamba.

Till a few years ago there was no demand for the saplings of native varieties. But now many native varieties are in high demand. Many people coming to the Kottukkal farm say that they have only heard names of native mangoes.

So during the season when the native mango trees of the farm starting fruiting, it provides a visual treat for the visitors. Mr. Chandrashekarar said many now come to the farm with this as the main purpose during season. The fruits are largely used to create root stocks for grafting.

Every year the farm sells close to about 10,000 grafted saplings of various mango varieties and about 2,500 saplings of these are native varieties since the past couple of years, Mr. Chandshekar said.

He added that even many of such trees that have survived are threatened due to various human interventions and concerted efforts are required to ensure that they don't go extinct.

*The farm has over 300 trees of about a dozen native varieties meant exclusively for propagation through grafting.*

### **Pre-monsoon showers trigger brisk agricultural activities in Shivamogga**



The recent spell of pre-monsoon showers, which was fairly widespread in the district, has prompted the farmers to start their agricultural activities.

The district received 193.8 mm rain till May 20 this year, against the average normal rain of 114.8 mm. In May alone, the district received 112 mm rain.

The taluk-wise distribution of rainfall this year (normal rain in brackets) was as follows: Shivamogga taluk 250.6 mm (118.4 mm), Bhadravati 98.2 mm

(110.4 mm), Tirthahalli 212.6 mm (107.5 mm), Sagar 194.8 mm (115.1 mm), Hosanagar 373.8 mm (125 mm), Shikaripur 126.4 mm (132.9 mm) and Sorab 99.9 mm (94.6 mm).

Deputy Director of Department of Agriculture K. Madhusudan told *The Hindu* that this year, the pre-monsoon rain was quite widespread in the district. Barring Bhadravati and Shikaripur taluks, the rest of the taluks received more than normal rain this year. Farmers had begun land preparation and levelling operations, he said.

Sowing would be taken up in about 1.8 lakh hectares of land in the district, every year. Of this, paddy would be cultivated in about 1 lakh hectares of land and maize in 65,000 hectares. Sowing operations had already commenced in Talaguppa hobli in Sagar taluk and Chandragutti hobli in Sorab taluk. Sowing in the remaining places would commence by the first week of June, he said.

Mr. Madhusudan said that adequate stock of seeds and fertilizers was being maintained in the district. The district had about 7,392 tonnes of fertilizer, including 4,388 tonnes of complex fertilizers, 1,928 tonnes of urea and 718 tonnes of DAP. The quality of fertilizers and sowing seeds with private agencies and warehouses of the Karnataka State Cooperative Marketing Federation had been checked. Apart from the private agencies involved in selling seeds and fertilizers, other inputs would also be sold to farmers through 40 raitha samparka kendras and 47 additional sale points identified by the department in remote places, Mr. Madhusudan said.

## **MSME meet to focus on value added agriculture, food processing**

Value-added agriculture and food processing are regarded as sun-rise sector of Karnataka's economy in view of its large potential for economic growth.

Mysuru-based CSIR-CFTRI is inherently linked to this sector with a number of initiatives in the areas of post-harvest technology. It has over 300 technologies in its repository and most of them have been successfully transferred to industries.

With this background, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Mysuru in partnership with CSIR-CFTRI and NABARD is organising an 'MSME Meet 2015: Value Added Agriculture and Food Processing' here on May 29. The event will be held in the campus of CFTRI at 9:30 a.m.

The objective is to showcase processing technologies developed by CFTRI in the areas of grains/fruits and vegetables/spices which are commercially attractive, nutritionally superior and safe food products for immediate adoption by MSMEs and aspiring entrepreneurs, a release by CII said.

CFTRI is involved in technology transfer, training, mentoring and providing customised turn-key solution in the advanced areas of food research.

### **Tech demos and pilot plant**

CSIR-CFTRI will also conduct technology demonstration/visit to laboratories and food processing pilot plant. Successful entrepreneurs' case studies and financial options from lending institutions will be also discussed, the release added.

Over 150 MSME food processing industries and aspiring entrepreneurs in this sector are expected to participate.

For participation, CII Mysuru can be contacted on:

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### **Good market price rescues coconut ryots**

Coconut farmers in Konaseema are a happy lot, despite production being on the lower side, as they have fetched good profit when compared to the previous year. Coconut prices in the domestic and export markets have gone up, taking the overall profit from Rs. 2,500 to Rs.10,000 per acre.

The farmers are getting remunerating prices as export of the nut has just begun.

Last year, the market price of 1,000 coconuts hovered in the range of Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 7,000 and this year the same has touched Rs. 12,000, says Donga Nageswara Rao, a farmer from Konaseema.

The rise of temperature coupled with the impact of Hudhud cyclone led to the steep decline in production in the region. “We could harvest only 200 to 400 nuts per acre this year when compared to the 3,000 last year,” he says. K. Satyanrayana, another farmer from Ambajipeta, says that the major problem now is the labour cost which has gone up significantly. Coconut is cultivated in 1.05 lakh hectares in AP of which 90 per cent are in Konaseema.



*Price of 1,000 coconuts, that hovered in the range of Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 7,000 last year, has gone up to Rs. 12,000*

### **Down to earth**



Techies may be more used to ploughing through Farmville online than actually digging soil with a hoe! In a bid to connect (or reconnect) with nature, a group of techies in Technopark have launched ‘Prakruthi,’ a ‘green club,’ which aims to promote environment-friendly and healthy living, organic farming and a sustainable co-existence with nature, among their compatriots on campus.

“Sitting in our ivory towers we get few opportunities to actually be in sync with nature. Then, there is the health issue. Did you know that Technopark is one of the biggest consumers of fast food in the state? As a result lifestyle diseases are particularly prevalent here. Also, this initiative is a way of giving back to nature,” says corporate communications executive Divas Sadasivan, one of the founding members of Prakruthi and an office-bearer of Natana, a socio-cultural forum on campus.

Natana is partnering the initiative, along with Tejus, a blood donation forum on campus, Centre for Innovation in Science and Social Action (CISSA), a city-based civil society organisation that's committed to sustainable development and social action, and Technopark itself. In fact, the seed thought for Prakruthi seems to have come about after a few techies attended a workshop on home farming by CISSA.

“Technopark and techies themselves have always been agents of change. It is the right place and the right time to start thinking green because Technopark, home to over 45,000 people, has a profile that makes others sit up and take notice. We believe that Prakruthi has the potential to kick start a social revolution, to free society from the dependence on pesticides, especially,” says Brijesh P.I., who works as a project leader with an IT firm on campus and is a founder-member of Tejus.

“Already there are several people on campus who are keen home farmers in their homes and terraces, myself included. However, a lot of people do not have the right knowhow and we aim to steer them on the right path,” adds Brijesh.

CISSA will be providing technical expertise, with Kerala State Horticultural Mission and Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) pitching in with support. Initially, they aim to target only 60 to 80 volunteers. “These people, whom we've identified as ‘leaders’, will be given training in the basic concepts. We aim to conduct at least a couple of classes a month on campus. The volunteers will in turn impart knowledge to others, thereby building a network of home farmers,” says C. Sureshkumar, general-secretary of CISSA.



Horticulture Mission is giving Prakruthi 5,000 seed packets free of cost and CISSA, in association with KAU, will develop at least half of it into seedlings and saplings.

“We have seeds of not only common vegetables such as amaranthus, tomato and cucumber but also that of native plants such as *chathura payar* (winged beans), *kachil* (yam), *kaattucheera* (amaranthus), *kumbalanga* (ash gourd), chundakka (Turkey berry) and the like, which have become underutilised in our diets, thereby adding to food diversity and biodiversity too. We are also training a squad of technicians who can make home visits and help the techies,” adds Dr. Sureshkumar. But it’s not only organic farming that’s on the agenda for Prakruthi. In the three weeks since the idea of the pan-Technopark green club was conceptualised, the techies, never ones to let the grass grow beneath their feet, have already worked out a feasible, long-term plan of action.

They have come up with a six point agenda, namely promoting green food, encouraging organic farming, propagating green living, supporting green ideas and emphasising on recycling and waste management.

“Central to our plan is changing the mindset of people in favour of green living. We need to create awareness about the positives of thinking and acting green and leading a responsible and sustainable lifestyle, through activities such as water conservation, utilising solar energy, car pooling, proper waste disposal, and the like. Growing and eating organic food is the first step and easiest way to get the point across. At a later stage, we also plan on supporting entrepreneurs to work on eco-friendly ideas and initiatives, helping out with technical expertise and even putting them in

touch with potential investors,” explains Divas. Brijesh adds: “We’re in it for the long run. Farming is not an overnight endeavour. It needs much time and patience. By this time next year we hope to have at least a 400 people in our green network. ORGANIC ONAM

### **Organic Onam**

Prakruthi will kick off ‘Phase One’ of the campaign by the beginning of June – in time to conduct an organic bazaar for and by Technopark employees for Onam! “Perhaps, we will arrange an organic sadya too – made completely with vegetables grown in our homes,” says Divas.

The organisation is also in talks with organic farmers from nearby Nanniyode village to retail their vegetables through kiosks at Nila, Bhavani and Tejaswani buildings. The kiosks will also serve as information counters.

### **EID unit gets Bonsucro award**

EID Parry (India) Ltd., on Thursday, said that its focus on sustainable sugarcane cultivation practices over the past few years had helped farmers achieve higher yield at lesser cost. The company also secured the prestigious Bonsucro certification for production standards.

The sugarcane farmers, particularly the ones with small land holding, attached to EID Parry’s Pugalur factory, located in Karur district of Tamil Nadu, has been able to improve yields by at least 10 per cent when compared with the levels two years ago through a range of sustainable actions initiated by the company as part of the programme to obtain

Bonsucro certification, the world benchmark for best practices in sugar production.

“Farmers of our factory could achieve an output of 36 tonnes per acre as against industry level of sub-30 tonnes per acre in this season,” said V.Ramesh, Managing Director of the company.

Pugalur sugar plant is the first in Asia to secure the certification and joins a 46-strong list of Bonsucro production standard certificate holders, with the other mills located in Brazil, Australia and Honduras.

Under Bonsucro framework, sugar-producing companies need to ensure that the agricultural practices followed are sustainable in the long term, protecting the farmer, the customer, the community and the environment. EID Parry intends to replicate the Pugalur model in its other eight factories located across three southern states in the future.

### **‘Contaminated fruits, vegetables sold in Kerala’**

The State government will take stringent measures to regulate the marketing of fruits and vegetables from neighbouring States, including Tamil Nadu, as it has become abundantly clear that these contain very high levels of pesticide residues, Health Minister V.S. Sivakumar has said.

The Minister has directed a high-level committee, chaired by Commissioner of Food Safety T.V. Anupama, to chalk out the necessary measures that need to be taken to prevent the sale of fruits and vegetables with high pesticide residual content in the State markets.

He has also directed Ms. Anupama to write to the Agriculture Produces Commissioner of Tamil Nadu regarding the issue.

The decision to take stringent control measures has been taken following the report of an inquiry committee instituted by the State that many harmful pesticides and fungicides, some of which had been banned in Kerala, were being used in an unrestrained manner on vegetables and fruit crops during harvest and later in many farmlands in Tamil Nadu and that these were being marketed in Kerala

The inquiry committee, chaired by Joint Commissioner of Food Safety K. Anilkumar, had visited the agricultural lands in Nagercoil, Tirunelveli, Dindigul, Kodaikanal, Ottanchatram, Coimbatore, and Mettupalayam and had held detailed discussions with the farmers and agricultural scientists, before filing the report.

The report was discussed in detail at a meeting chaired by Mr. Sivakumar here on Thursday.

The high-level committee on food safety will meet again on May 27 to decide further measures to be taken.

### **Workshop for farmers on drip fertigation today**

The Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM) is organising a workshop on Drip Fertigation (a method of applying soluble fertilisers along with water through drip irrigation system) for select farmers from different parts of the State on the centre campus on Friday.

The workshop, being organised in collaboration with the Agriculture Department, will be inaugurated by Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan at 2 p.m, said CWRDM executive director N.B. Narasimha Prasad at a press meet here on Thursday.

#### Part of project

The workshop was part of a project titled 'Farmer participatory demonstration and evaluation of drip fertigation technique in Kerala,' funded by the Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi.

Under this, 22 demonstration plots for drip fertigation had been identified in 10 districts in the State.

#### Farm visit

This included plots for crops such as coconut, areca nut, banana, and different vegetables. "A visit by the participating farmers to the selected plots will also be part of the workshop," Dr. Prasad said.

Explaining the advantages of drip fertigation, K. Madhava Chandran, a scientist at the centre, said the method helped in saving both water and fertilizer use.

"Research has shown that drip fertigation contributes to high yield and quality of crops," said Dr. Madhava Chandran at the press meet.

Data on the influence of drip fertigation on soil moisture, nutrients and yield of crops, which are collected from the demonstration plots as part of the

evaluation component of the project, will be provided to the participants during the seminar.

As many as 150 farmers will participate in the programme, besides agricultural officials and scientists from different research institutes.

### Special talk

R. Ajith Kumar, Director of Agriculture, Government of Kerala, will deliver a special talk on the subject, said E.J. Joseph, scientist and head of water management (Agriculture) division.

Scientists C.M. Sushanth and U. Surendran will make a presentation on drip fertigation during the workshop.

### **Mango, jackfruit mela begins**



The Curzon Park here has turned into a mango zone with the four-day mango and jackfruit mela getting off to a start on Thursday.



The park is filled with a yellow hue as varieties of mangoes and jackfruit are on display.

Mango enthusiasts are thronging the mela to take home their favourite varieties.

Organised jointly by the Karnataka State Mango Marketing and Development Board and the Department of Horticulture, over 30 farmers have brought naturally ripened mangoes, which are displayed in 30 stalls. Four jackfruit growers are participating with their produce.

The mela concludes on May 24 and will be open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Board Chairperson Kamalakshi Rajanna inaugurated the mela. She said it had been organised to provide a platform for mango growers to market quality fruits directly to consumers. Such melas are also being organised in other districts, she said, adding that the farmers and consumers were benefitted by the effort.

If the mela gets good response, it will be extended, she said.

Over 20 varieties of mangoes, including traditional and popular ones, are available. About 150 tonnes of mangoes are expected to be sold in this mela, she said.

Deputy Director of Horticulture H.M. Nagaraj and Assistant Director of Horticulture (State sector) Krishna Kumar were present.

## Express Recipes: How to make Spinach Orange Salad



Summers is the perfect time to experiment with salads. The Spinach and Orange salad has just the right nutrients to keep our body healthy in the sweltering heat.

### **Spinach Orange Salad**

Serves 4-6

#### **Ingredients**

200 gms spinach (firm & fresh bundle with small sized leaves), 2 big, firm oranges

#### Dressing

4 tbsp olive oil, 2 tbsp honey

½ tsp light soya sauce, 2 tbsp white vinegar, ½ tsp salt

## Topping

6-7 almonds, 1 tbsp sesame seeds (til)

### **Method**

1. Remove the stems of the spinach. Soak the spinach leaves for 15 minutes in a bowl of cold water to which ice cubes are added. Remove from water and pat dry on a kitchen towel. Tear into big pieces.

2. Remove fibres from each segment of orange. Slightly cut each orange segment from the joint end and remove the fibrous covering and the seeds. Keep aside.

3. Mix all the ingredients of the dressing in a small spice grinder or with a whisk till the dressing turns slightly thick.

4. Toast the almonds in a microwave for 2 minutes in a pan on low heat for 2-3 minutes till fragrant. Cut almonds into slices. Toast the sesame seed also in a pan till crisp and light golden. Keep nuts aside.

5. At the time of serving, pour the dressing over the spinach and orange segments, toss to mix well. Remove the salad into a shallow flat platter, top with toasted almonds and sesame seeds. Serve immediately.

### **Chinese herbal soup curbs fatigue in cancer patients**

A traditional Chinese medicine, a soup containing 12 herbs has been found to significantly reduce fatigue suffered by cancer patients within two-three weeks of the treatment, new study says.



The researchers tested the safety and efficacy of the herbal mixture Ren Shen Yangrong Tang (RSYRT).

Yichen Xu and colleagues from Peking University School of Oncology in Beijing, China, along with Xin Shelley Wang from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, US, assessed the level of fatigue in cancer patients before and after RSYRT therapy.

Patients took RSYRT twice a day for six weeks. The researchers found that RSYRT was both effective and safe, with no evidence of toxicity in any of the patients treated.

Fatigue is one of the major challenges in cancer care. According to traditional Chinese medicine, fatigue is characterised by a deficiency in Qi, a physical life force related to the energy flow of the body. RSYRT is intended to improve Qi deficiency.

The results appeared in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*.

# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## **Agriculture department begins soil sample collection**

In an effort to stop farmers from using unnecessary fertilizers in the fields, the agriculture department has started work on issuing them soil health cards.

Chief agriculture officer B S Chinna told TOI on Thursday that the department had given a target of 10,000 samples to the four soil testing laboratories at Amritsar, Baba Bakala, Jandiala and Ajnala.

He said after testing the soil for major and micro nutrients, farmers would be given a personalized soil health card, with suggestions to use only those fertilizers which were required by the soil for healthy crop and not use them as recommended by shopkeepers or commission agents. He said soil test-based nutrient management would not only improve crop productivity but also minimize the wastage of fertilizers. He added that overdose of fertilizers was also harmful for human health as the produce would have the residual effect of chemical fertilizers.

A farmers' leader Rattan Singh said it was an appreciable step to guide farmers in using fertilizers in right kind and quantity and saving them from the clutches of greedy fertilizer sellers. He also cautioned that the government should also keep an eye on supply and sale of fertilizers so that farmers couldn't be exploited in open market.

### **M&M buys 33% in farm gear arm of Mitsubishi**

The \$17-billion automotives-to-software [Mahindra Group](#) (M&M) is buying a 33% stake in Japanese conglomerate Mitsubishi's tractors and agricultural equipment division for \$25 million, making the Indian major's first foray in the manufacturing sector in the world's third largest economy. With its presence in Japan through Mitsubishi, M&M, the world's largest tractor manufacturer by numbers, wants to tap the fast growing [ASEAN market](#) and cross-sell products and brands in markets.

The deal allows M&M to take a 33% stake in [Mitsubishi Agricultural Machinery](#) (MAM) through fresh issue of common shares and also non-voting shares. Mahindra will also get four board seats.

### **Govt backed Vista in setting up agro unit**

In what may cause further embarrassment to chief minister Naveen Patnaik in chit fund scam, the economic offence wing (EOW) of state Crime Branch has found that the state agriculture department allegedly showed favour to controversial chit fund company Vista Management Services Limited to do business in the state.

The EOW has found a letter (copy with TOI) in which, BJD leader and former chairman of APICOL (Agricultural Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited) Balakrushna Rath asked the Khurda district agriculture officer on November 16, 2011 to issue a 'promoter profile' to Vista and process Vista's proposal to set up an Agro Service Centre (ASC) at Bantala village in the district. Rath died in 2012 following a road accident.



Earlier, APICOL was found to have selected Seashore Group, a Ponzi firm, for some PPP projects. In November last year, CBI had raided Rath's house in connection with Seashore Group scam at Titlagarh in Balangir district.

On Wednesday, a two-member team of EOW visited APICOL office here and inquired about the corporation's link with Vista. "We cooperated with the investigating agency and supplied them requisite information," APICOL's managing director Om Kar told TOI. "The former chairman had sent the letter to Khurda agriculture officer. But APICOL had no business or financial transaction with Vista," Kar said.

EOW seized some brochures in which the company claimed it partnered with APICOL in several projects in public-private-partnership (PPP) mode. "The company claimed to have partnered with APICOL for execution of projects worth nearly Rs 500 crore. We are verifying the authenticity," said an EOW officer.

The brochures claimed the company joined hands with APICOL to set up seed processing unit, mushroom farming, layer farming, emu farming, fishery, onion dehydration plant, cold storage, milk processing unit and maize processing unit at different places in Odisha. The brochures have photographs of a BJD minister and a BJD Rajya Sabha MP, who attended the company's functions in the past. The company had ambitious plans to set up power plants, schools, hospitals, sugar industry, paper mills and media house.

APICOL, which was under scanner for partnering with controversial Seashore Group in some projects, denied it had any link with Vista Management Services Limited. "We did not select Vista for any PPP project. The company must have misused our brand to garner the faith of public," Kar said.

In a related development, a team of EOW raided the house of Vista CMD Dev Kumar Panda at Jaypatna in Kalahandi district on Wednesday. On May 17, the EOW arrested Panda from Bhubaneswar railway station while he was planning to leave the country.

# THE HINDU BusinessLine

**How warehouse-based sales can mitigate farm marketing risk**



An absence of concrete solutions to the problems of farmers is an outcome of collective systemic failure; however, natural risks associated with farming are often blamed for it. Though production risks can be mitigated by subscribing to suitable crop insurance scheme, the risk associated in marketing of agricultural produce is yet to get any absolute solution.

Marketing risk can be mitigated to a great extent by utilizing the services of warehouses and cold storages which help in postponing the sale till the market becomes favourable. But lack of capacity in holding the produce, financing multiple transportation, i.e. from farm to warehouse and warehouse to market and meeting storage charges prevents farmers from utilizing the services of warehouses and cold storages. Availability of markets at distant places from the farm or from warehouse exaggerates the problem.

Recalling the recommendations of the National Farmers Commission (2004) which emphasizes that a marketing outlet should ideally serve 80 square km i.e. it should be available within 5 km radius of farmers' field.

However, under current scenario, average area served by a market is 115 sq. km while an average area served by a regulated market is 454 sq.km (Planning Commission, December 2011).

The growing number of agricultural warehouses in the country has the potential to supplement existing agricultural marketing infrastructure. Marketing outlets and warehouses are two of the most basic infrastructure required by the farmers, traders and other participants in the channel. Recently there have been instances of promotion of warehouses as an

alternative market platform. The concept has been shaping up in Karnataka through initiatives of Rashtriya e-Market Services Private Limited. A similar initiative has been seen in Punjab where silos have been notified as Mandis.

### **Warehouse-Based Sale**

As of now warehouses are not recognised as a component of market where sale/ purchase of commodities can take place. In order to declare a warehouse as a sub-market yard, the APMC Act of the states have to be amended and the warehouses which are fit to serve the purpose may be notified by respective state governments. Generally warehouses accredited by WDRA may be selected to be notified as a sub-market yard as the accreditation norms of WDRA requires warehouses to follow scientific storage practices which ultimately results in quality keeping of the produce.

During February 2015, the ‘Committee for Strengthening Negotiable Warehouse Receipts by the WDRA in the Country’ has also emphasised that warehouses could serve as alternative Mandis. The committee stated “Government of India may pursue the matter with all the State Governments for permitting the registered warehouses with the WDRA to be notified as Mandis under the relevant APMC Act”.

### **Advantage stakeholders**

The first advantage to a farmer will be in the form of cost saving in transportation as farmers need to transport produce only either to the Mandi (if they opt to sell immediately after harvest) or warehouse (if they opt to sell later). The additional advantage which a farmer can have will be in the form of availability of pledge loan. The commodity stored in WDRA

accredited warehouses are eligible for getting issue of a Negotiable Warehouse Receipt which could be considered as better collateral in availing loans from financial institutions. The third advantage for farmers as well as traders is in the form of flexibility in timing of sale/purchase of produce i.e. advantage of price movement between harvest and lean season can also be encashed.

The other advantage which a state may have with warehouse-based sale may be in establishing a better online marketing platform for agricultural produce. At warehouses, assaying facility may be availed by the warehousing agency and on an integrated online platform, the commodities stored in warehouses can be displayed for auction and sale. Having a quick data of available/ expected supply in the market for different commodities will be an additional advantage for government in deciding future course of actions in maintaining price stability in the market.

### **Way forward**

As of April 2015, the number of warehouse accredited with WDRA is 706 only. If the concept of Warehouse Based Sales has to flourish, the accreditation has to gather real pace. The number of accreditation agencies functioning on behalf of WDRA has also to be increased in states to speed up accreditation.

Also, there should be some relaxation in accreditation norms for the warehouses constructed under Rural Godown Scheme so that these warehouses can also qualify for accreditation, as well as to serve as sub-market yards. WDRA alternatively may also promote bankers in preferring

its accredited warehouses which will help farmers in availing pledge loan through Negotiable Warehouse Receipt.

The writer is a New Delhi-based commodity expert. Views are personal.

### **Monsanto gets stay on Bt cotton royalty cut**



The Andhra Pradesh High Court has stayed a Telangana Government order that has reduced the royalty fee (or trait value) on Bollgard-II (BG-II) seeds. Mahyco-Monsanto Biotech (India), which owns the BG-II technology and sub-licences the same to seed manufacturers, moved the court, asking it to quash the order.



“The GO 238 issued on May 11 is illegal and arbitrary. We appeal to the court to quash the said GO that tries to fix or regulate the trait value charged by us from its sub-licensees,” the firm said in the petition.

“The court has granted an interim stay on that part of the government order which had sought to fix or regulate the trait value,” the firm said in a statement on Thursday.

The order reduced the royalty fee to Rs. 50 from Rs.90 and increased the procurement component to Rs. 330 from Rs. 290. (Firms procure the seed from the seed producers before marketing them in sealed packets.) It put the MSP at Rs. 930 on a 450-gm packet.

The Andhra Pradesh Government, which also issued an order recently fixing the price at Rs. 930, has not altered the royalty fee.

“The Government had wrongly enforced a reduction in trait fees by overriding mutually agreed private contracts between MMB and the seed companies. Trait fees in India are the lowest for these technologies across cotton growing countries,” the firm said in a statement on Thursday.

### **Mixed trend in edible oils**

Edible oils prices ruled mixed with positive sentiments tracking a rebound in futures amid limited demand from stockists. On the Bombay Commodity Exchange, palmolein and cotton refined oil rose by 2 and 1 for 10 kg each. Rapeseed oil was up 10 while soya oil declined by 5 as local refineries brought down their prices by 10. Liberty was quoting palmolein at 496 JNPT, super palmolein 530, soyabean refined oil 595. Ruchi

traded palmolein at 495 JNPT, soyabean refined oil 590, sunflower refined oil 700. Allana's rates: palmolein 497, super palmolein 535, soyabean refined oil 591 and sunflower oil 705. In Saurashtra-Rajkot, groundnut oil *Telia* tin was 1,510 (1,515) and loose (10 kg) at 950 (950).

BCE spot rates ( /10 kg): groundnut oil 940 (940), soya ref. oil 595 (600), sunflower exp. ref. 635 (645), sunflower ref. 700 (700), rapeseed ref. oil 790 (780), rapeseed exp. ref. 760 (750), cottonseed ref. oil 600 (599) and palmolein 495 (493).

### **Lack of fresh orders grinds turmeric**

**Spot turmeric prices at Erode markets decreased by 150-200 a quintal on Thursday on absence of any fresh orders from North India.**

On Thursday, the arrival improved to 4,500 bags and only medium quality turmeric arrived for sale. So the traders quoted decreased price and purchased 55-60 per cent stocks.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger turmeric was sold at 5,509-8,059 a quintal; the root variety 5,219-7,299. Of the arrival of 927 bags, 310 were sold. At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger turmeric traded at 7,119-8,150 and the root variety 6,149-7,369.

## **Monsoon breaks fresh ground in Bay; lagging still over Arabian Sea**

After wallowing for five days since onset in south Andaman Sea, the South-West monsoon has been able to break new ground in the Bay of Bengal, expanding to more areas on Thursday.

An India Met Department update said that the monsoon has covered the entire Andaman Sea, more parts of southeast Bay of Bengal and some part of south-west and east-central Bay of Bengal.

### **Strong winds**

The Sri Lanka Met Department warned that strong south-westerly winds clocking up to 60 km/hr would prevail along the western and southern coasts of the islands.

This would sustain monsoon conditions just south to the southern tip, which is its next port of call.

Some of these may touch off activity off the Kerala coast, with the local Met office predicting winds would once again turn monsoon-friendly westerly until Friday up till when forecasts were valid.

Its outlook said that strong westerly winds with speeds reaching 55 km/hr may blow along and off the Kerala coast and over Lakshadweep until Friday afternoon.

### **Delayed process**

To the east, monsoon winds continued to be strong over large parts of the Bay of Bengal but formation of a low-pressure area – which could escalate the onset process – are being discounted.

This is mainly being attributed to the delay in formation of the counterpart ‘heat low’ over west Rajasthan, which is generated after intense heating of the land there.

There is currently a widespread heat wave over an arc of region extending from north-west India into central India and adjoining north peninsular India, but not to the desired level.

Delay in heating of the land (up to even 50 deg Celsius at times) is thought to be the fallout of the unseasonal showery weather over practically the entire country during the spring-summer.

A proper ‘heat low’ represents lowering of pressure by degrees from south-west India to the lowest in the North. This alone can set up the required gradient for the monsoon winds to blow in.

### **Heat wave**

This is so because winds blow from a high-pressure area (seas around the peninsula) to that with a lower pressure (land heating up to cause air to expand lift) during the monsoon.

India Met said that the main weather features over land for the next four days would be heat wave to severe heat wave conditions over north-west, central parts and adjoining peninsula.