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# DECCAN Chronicle

## Mangoes arrive early in Telangana

Fruits are usually on sale by March but 2017 breaks trend.



Officials are saying that a few parts of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and AP have adopted hybrid crops (Representational Image)

**Hyderabad:** Karnataka and a few parts of AP, including Chittoor, which supplied mangoes to the city during the rains last year (until September), have started supplying 3 varieties of the fruit early.

Usually, mangoes start arriving here in the first week of March but, for the first time ever, Hyderabad is able to buy mangoes in January.

Officials are saying that a few parts of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and AP have adopted hybrid crops but very few varieties such as the Banginapally, Totapuri and Rumani are available off season.

But nearly a tonne of the Rumani variety has been arriving at the biggest markets in both the Telugu states for the past two days. The Rumani variety is being supplied from Sri Bommarajapuram near Puttur in Chittoor district.

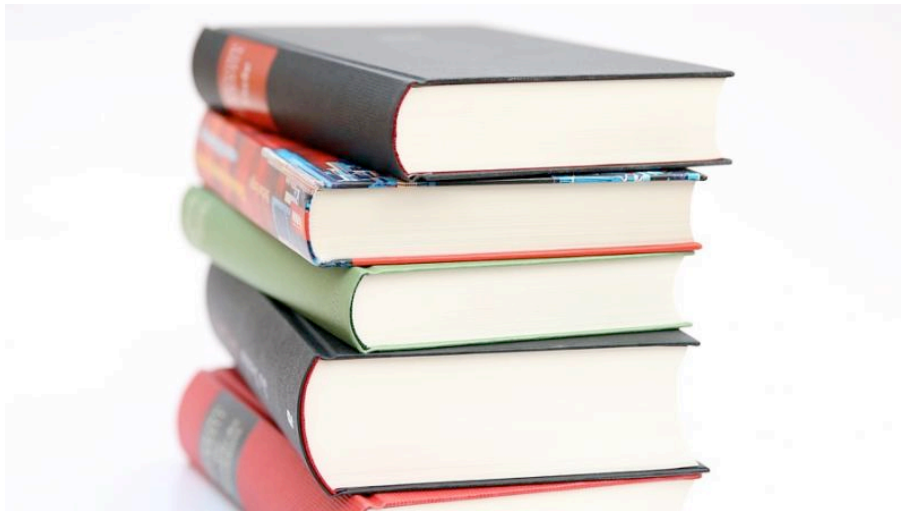
Similarly, Banginapally and Totapuri varieties are being supplied by farmers from Karnataka and the Chittor district in A.P.

Commission agents' association head at the massive Gaddiannaram market, Mohammad Tajuddin, says usually, mangoes arrive in the first week of March.

“But arrivals have been increasing from January this year. Low quantity of stock has been coming but we are expecting more in February. During season, the Gaddiannaram market gets 1,000 to 1,500 tonne of mangoes,” he said. Mr. Tajuddin said prominent varieties would start arriving by summer.

### **Kerala: Handbook on food standards on cards**

The food safety manual would also deal with steps required for protecting food preparation areas from pests.



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** Food safety officials are bringing out a comprehensive handbook on food safety habits and standards for the Food Business Operators (FBOs) and consumers. The handbook will contain every little detail that is required for food safety. Simple matters like washing hands before handling food, while preparing food, after going to toilet and washing and sanitizing all surfaces and equipment used for food preparation will figure in the handbook. There will be specific focus on protecting kitchen areas from insects, pests and other animals. It will have guidelines on slaughtering of animals to ensure the area is kept clean and separated from the place where food preparation takes place.

The emphasis will be on additional controls, including personal protective gear required in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza to prevent health risks to human beings. Hotel owners will be sensitized on small but important steps, including proper cleaning of plates and utensils to ensure that micro organisms that can cause food poisoning and other health issues could be prevented. Special attention needs to be given on utensils used for eating and drinking and utensils that contain food. Sanitize cutting boards and utensils after they have been in contact with raw meat or seafood and proper cleaning and drying of cleaning equipment as micro organisms grow fast in damp places.

The food safety manual would also deal with steps required for protecting food preparation areas from pests. These include rats, mice, birds, cockroaches, flies and other insects besides pets like dogs, cats and birds as they carry micro organisms. Pests carry fleas and ticks on their feet, fur and feathers hence food needs to be kept in closed containers. Food safety authorities say that food business operators should ensure that they don't treat food in a way that makes it harmful for consumption. They should make sure that food quality is the same that is claimed by the provider. The idea is to prevent them from misguiding people by the manner in which food is labeled, marketed or advertised. In the event of any complaint, the unsafe food should be withdrawn or recalled at the earliest and information should be supplied to the consumers through leaflets or posters.

### **It's cool to drink water from these mud bottles**

As part of “Neer Patra” drive, the NGO has already sold more than 1,000 such bottles.



Eco-friendly water bottles created by NGO Raise Empower Women Around.

**Bengaluru:** A city-based NGO REWA (Raise Empower Women Around) has come up with eco-friendly water bottles to raise awareness against the hazards posed by plastic ones and improve the livelihood of underprivileged women. As part of “Neer Patra” drive, the NGO has already sold more than 1,000 such bottles.

“The idea is to empower underprivileged women while creating awareness among people about health hazards of using plastic bottles,” said Abhishek Saran, Director, REWA.

He pointed out that though plastic bottles have made drinking water easily available, people don't pay heed to ‘leaching,’ that takes place if these bottles are used continuously.

“Leaching means that some of the chemical content of the plastic bottle is

discharged into the water. This makes bottled water hazardous to health,” Abhishek added.

The increasing awareness about eco-friendly products and earthenware got the NGO to foray into making earthen water bottles.

“It is now produced on a large scale in Bengaluru and is sold in shops and streets throughout the city. We have also started making earthen bottles which can be used for storing drinking water. It comes with a cap which prevents dust and dirt from entering the bottle. The bottle keeps the water cool, maintaining an ideal temperature for consumption,” he adds.

As for the bottles Abhishek said, “The clay prevents green algae from forming inside the bottle, hence, they are easy to maintain as light rinsing is all that it takes to wash away all the dirt. But if one finds the need for a thorough wash then it can be done by using a bottle brush. The outer layer can be washed using normal scrub and soap used in the kitchen.”

Regarding environmental impact he said the clay bottles are made out of natural elements of the earth and are biodegradable. Whereas, plastic poses a major threat to the environment.

For REWA, this initiative also means helping underprivileged women improve their livelihood by making the clay bottles. So far they were eking out a livelihood by making earthen pots.

## THE HINDU

### **Bring sunshine to your farms, Collector tells ryots**

Not very long ago, Prekka Subba Rao, a resident of Ventrapragada village of Peddaparupudi mandal in Krishna district, was a worried man. In the absence of electricity supply to his village, he was forced to shell out between ₹1,500 and ₹2,000 per day at the time of transplantation in his fields.

“Not any more. I opted for a solar-powered farm pump set in June 2014, a zero-maintenance mode of irrigation that has brought me peace and happiness in addition to prosperity,” said the farmer, interacting with Krishna district Collector Babu A. on Saturday.

As part of a visit to the agricultural fields at Eedupugallu to assess the functioning of the solar pump sets, he interacted with the local farmers.

Among the 675 districts across the country, Krishna district is in the forefront in use of solar-powered pump sets. Urging farmers, especially in areas where grid electricity is not available, to rely on the eco-friendly solar pump sets, the

Collector said the renewable energy source was a boon in disguise. “Andhra Pradesh is surging ahead in the renewable energy sector and the Government is focussed on tapping this area in a big way. In the last two years, several initiatives have been taken to promote solar energy and farmers are given a huge subsidy to be able to opt for this new mode of irrigation. Farmers who opted for the pump sets in the first phase encouraged others to follow suit and the several advantages of it were spread through word of mouth,” said Mr. Babu. He complimented officials and staff of the Non-Conventional and Renewable Energy Development Corporation of Andhra Pradesh (NREDCAP) and Discom for facilitating the shift to the new mode of energy.

Pointing to lily bulbs in his two-acre land, Palagani Ramamohan Rao, said he had cultivated the flower and was sure of adequate water for it. “After attending a few farmers’ meetings, I realised that by replacing the diesel run water pumps with solar-powered ones, I could reduce the cost of investment. I was paying Rs. 50 per hour for a hired pump set and that money is saved now,” he said.

Penamaluru MLA Bode Prasad said this mode of energy was best suited for farmers facing inadequate power supply.

NREDCAP District Manager K. Srinivasa Rao said 1,110 farmers in the district had switched to solar pump sets. He said the department would receive an award at a function scheduled to be held in New Delhi on January 24 for being in the first place in the use of the sets.

### **Most redgram crop yet to reach market**

ADILABAD: The pace of trading and payments made to redgram farmers hardly matches the fanfare with which the State Government opened purchase centres in Adilabad district on January 10.

Against an expected arrival of over 6 lakh tonnes during the season, only 6,087 quintals of redgram have been traded under the minimum support price operations by Government agencies until January 18 and no payment has been made to the 483 farmers who sold their produce worth over ₹3 crore at market yards in Adilabad and Nirmal districts.

### **Moisture content**

Officials attribute the slow pace of trading to the issue of high moisture content in the redgram arriving at the markets. “The Food Corporation of India and the National Agriculture Marketing Cooperative Federation and the TS MARKFED are insisting on quality produce before making purchases,” observed an official at Adilabad Agriculture Market Yard.

He said the delay is because farmers are drying their produce after bringing it to the market rather than bringing in sufficiently dry redgram. The produce with more than 12 per cent moisture content is being rejected by the purchasing agencies.

### Payment process

Though the government had promised quick payments through bank accounts, no farmer has received payment. “This is because the purchased quantity has not been shifted to godowns,” General Manager of MARKFED Adilabad branch Gouru Nagender explained.

The payment is released by the FCI and NAFED upon generation of bills which happens only when the purchased redgram is deposited in the godowns. “We have received about ₹20 lakh which has been deposited in banks and will be released today to farmers,” Mr. Nagender added.

Of the 12 purchase centres which the government wanted to open in Adilabad, Nirmal, Mancherial and Kumram Bheem Asifabad district, only five are functioning in — Ichoda, Boath and Adilabad in Adilabad and Bhainsa and Kubeer at Nirmal.

The Bellampalli purchase centre has been opened in Mancherial and Jainoor and Asifabad will soon be opened in KB Asifabad district.

Trading at these centres and issue of payment needs to be speeded up as large quantities of the produce is expected to arrive in the coming weeks.

“Adilabad and Kumram Bheem Asifabad districts account for over 80 per cent of the produce so there is a need to concentrate on the market yards in these districts,” suggested a farmer leader from the ruling party.

### **Paddy transplantation picks up after festival**

#### ***Dip in temperatures, demonetisation and other factors delayed transplantation process in Nizamabad district***

The yasangi [earlier called rabi] activity which was slow till the Sankranti festival started picking up in the last few days and farmers are busy with paddy transplantations in the command area of major and medium irrigation projects and also under bore-wells.

However, in the tail end of the Sri Ram Sagar and the Nizam Sagar projects and also under a couple of medium irrigation reservoirs the activity is still slow due to problems in release of water.

At the beginning of the season, demonetization and farm labour problems hit the transplantation activity with farmers being unable to get money and coolies not showing interest in taking up work.

### ***Normal area***

Under normal circumstances, paddy is sown in 51,920 hectares [running average taken for the last five years] and as of now it is transplanted in 48,000 hectares.

“In the current yasangi paddy is likely to be sown in another 40,000 hectares and it may last next 20 days. In the last week the activity was hectic,” said Sreekar Babu, an Agriculture Officer at the District Agriculture Office here. He says that dip in night temperatures would delay transplantation as the growth of seedlings would be affected by the cold weather, what is technically called transplantation shock. Therefore, farmers wait for the rise in temperature to transplant the paddy, he added.

### ***Delays***

Another factor for delay is that farmers are not using the transplantation machines, for various reasons. That apart, migration of farm coolies who come every year from Nalgonda district has come down this year. The irregular release of water from Nizam Sagar and Sri Ram Sagar resulted in the delay in the transplantation, former minister P. Sudarshan Reddy said. “As per my information not even 30 per cent of the sowing has been completed in the tail-end. Further, there is a lack of coordination among authorities, which has led to delay regular release of water,” he added.