

## An experiment with rainwater harvesting



photo: mohammed Yousuf

Me and my cousin Subash, an engineering student, spent our holidays usefully. While visiting our native place, we went for a walk early in the morning and admired the beauty of nature. We noticed that the land was dry and overheard many farmers discussing heatedly about the scarcity of water in the recent years. Witnessing their problems, Subash and I decided to save rainwater and use it for agriculture and other purposes in our houses. Once we returned home, we began working on this issue. We considered the rooftop area of our house and calculated the water harvested per annum only in our house. The results were remarkable.

The rapidly increasing population is resulting in higher rates of consumption of water.

This is putting a lot of pressure on our limited available freshwater resources.

In order to conserve and meet our daily demands of water, we need to think of alternative cost-effective and relatively easier technological methods of conserving water. Rainwater harvesting is one of the best methods fulfilling those requirements.

Rainwater is a free source and relatively clean, and with proper treatment it can be even used as a potable water source.

## **Effectiveness**

The efficiency of rainwater harvesting depends on the materials used, design and construction, maintenance and the total amount of rainfall.

The feasibility of rainwater harvesting in a particular locality is highly dependent on the amount and intensity of rainfall. Our experiment

We tried to find out how much water is used by our family and water that can be harvested. The table on the left shows you our findings. Rishi,

## **Call to empower rural women in farming**

In-charge Collector K. Nirmala has asked the scientists to strive to empower rural women by enlightening them on better home science and agricultural management practices and make agriculture a viable occupation.

Addressing women at a meeting on regional research and extension for rural women empowerment organised by the Home Science Department of N.G. Ranga University, Hyderabad, at YSR auditorium here, she said priority to agriculture cannot be reduced in a conventional agriculture-based country. However, farmers were coming to an opinion that agriculture was no longer viable owing to the rapid climatic changes, increasing investment and other problems. Lesser agricultural yields would lead to severe food scarcity, she feared.

Calling for the need to make agriculture viable, she stressed the need for deployment of improved mechanisms for reducing the workload of farmers and adapt to timely changes. Besides agriculture, women should be encouraged to take up allied activities such as poultry and home science, Ms. Nirmala said. Home science practices would help them produce products with value addition and hence scientists should impart them the knowhow, she said. Women should avail themselves of the training programmes in Krishi Vignana Kendra and Gruha Mitra wing, she added.

Joint Director of Agriculture G. Jonathan said women were playing a key role in agriculture and they should be trained to improve their earnings.

## **'Universities should keep farmers' needs in mind'**



S.A. Patil, chairman of the Karnataka Krishi Mission, speaking at a programme in Bidar on Thursday.— Photo: T. Gopichand

“Farm universities should lead a movement to transform agriculture from subsistence into a business,” said S.A. Patil, chairman of the Karnataka Krishi Mission, here on Thursday.

He was speaking after inaugurating a programme organised by the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University (KVAFSU). He urged KVAFSU and universities of agricultural sciences to focus on research and keep in mind the needs of farmers.

“Universities should produce skilled, qualified personnel and they should try to turn agriculture into a profitable venture,” Dr. Patil said.

## **Research**

The university should also take up specific research projects which were need-based and locally relevant. “It is important that the benefits of research reach farmers. That calls for dedicated teachers and non-teaching staff who are willing to work beyond their scheduled duty hours,” Dr. Patil said. He urged the university to take up a project to crossbreed the native Deoni breed of cattle with high yielding exotic varieties.

“Few programmes succeed without the people’s participation. The university should always keep farmers at the centre of its plans,” Dr. Patil said..

Dr Patil urged farmers to reduce the cultivation of water-intensive crops such as sugarcane and go for crops that required less water but were more profitable.

“Each kg of sugar needs over 2,000 litres of water. We should discourage this and divert farmers towards profitable crops like groundnut, Bengal gram and soya,” he said.

## Poor arrivals push up banana prices



The banana wholesale market in Tiruchi.— PHOTO: R. M. RAJARATHINAM.

The price of banana has more than doubled in the past two months.

While the Tamil Nadu Banana Growers' Federation anticipated that it would further go up by 10-15 per cent, merchants said that there was no question of any further surge in prices.

T. M. Rajamanickam, a major banana commission agent here, pointed out that the price of *poovan* variety, which was selling around Rs. 5 a kg in November 2012, rose to Rs. 8 the next month and had now touched Rs. 15. In 2011, the maximum it fetched was only Rs 10.

Similarly, the price of *rasthali* which was Rs. 10 per kg is now hovering between Rs.15 and Rs. 20 a kg. The price of *karpooravalli* , which was Rs. 7-8 per kg last year, is now around Rs. 13 a kg. Tiruchi market receives banana from Thottiyam, Kulithalai, Mohanur, Kattuputhur, Musiri, Manachanallur, Lalgudi, Thirukkattuppalli, Pudukottai and Madurai.

Mr. Rajamanickam attributed hike in prices to poor arrivals. "There is a shortfall of 35 per cent. However, the current demand will not last beyond Thaipooasam (January 26) as Palani requires substantial quantity for panchamirtham," he said.

G. Ajeethan, general secretary of the federation, said the major reason was that planting had not been done at least in 20 per cent of the total banana area of two lakh acres in the State. In the tsunami-affected Cuddalore district, more than 30,000 acres had not been planted at all.

He said that the fear of water scarcity, especially in the Cauvery dependent districts like Erode, Namakkal, Karur, Tiruchi, Thanjavur, Pudukottai and Perambalur, was definitely haunting the farmers. “Banana requires an investment of Rs. 50,000 per acre and is a water-intensive and labour-intensive crop.”

The water demand would virtually double if the temperature, which was hovering below 30 degree Centigrade now, touched 35 degree C. A banana fruit required 200 litres of water, he said.

The major reason for banana being raised in the Cauvery banks was the moisture content in the soil due to the aquifers. With nil flow in the Cauvery, the situation looked bleak and the total area might slump in the Cauvery belt, he said. He hoped that the State government would help the banana growers by paying the insurance premium for non-loanees also. Besides, he wanted the Agricultural Insurance Company (AIC) to adopt village-level assessment instead of firkha-level assessment for deciding the percentage of loss.

S. Suryanarayanan, Administrative Officer, AIC, said that there was a provision for including any block in Tiruchi district under the “localised loss assessment” of banana crops wherein even a “headcount” of affected fields was permitted. He felt that the Modified National Agriculture Insurance Scheme would be immensely beneficial to the banana growers.

He said the loanee farmers would have to pay only 3.9 per cent of the sum insured because an equal amount was borne both by the Centre and the State.

### **Reservoir across Kallar Odai to benefit 859 acres of dry land**

Work for a new reservoir across the Kallar Odai is going on at an estimate of Rs.19 crore, Collector Darez Ahmed said here on Thursday.

At the monthly farmers’ grievances day at the collectorate, he said this project is between Vaalayur Hills in Viswakudi panchayat and Semmalai.

The structure would help store 30.67 million cubic feet of water. While the reservoir could directly benefit 859 acres of dry land, it could provide irrigation to about 420 acres of ayacut below the Vengalam Eri.

By replenishing the aquifers, 169 acres would be irrigated through wells.

Besides, indirectly, the reservoir would benefit 2,000 acres. The Collector said that against the target of 1,400 acres to be brought under micro-irrigation, at 100 per cent subsidy, so far 900 acres had been covered.

He was confident that it would be possible to double the coverage area by adopting micro-irrigation methods like drip and sprinkler systems.

In order to encourage vegetable growers and also those who raise flowers, inputs are being supplied totally free of cost to an extent of Rs.7,500 to Rs.12,500 per hectare under the National Horticultural Mission and National Agricultural Development Programme.

Whoever is in need could contact the Assistant Horticultural Officer of the block.

Mr.Ahmed said e-governance is being implemented in this district under the direction of the Chief Minister.

Hence, farmers could easily obtain all the documents, including patta and chitta from about 40 offices, including the agricultural co-operative societies and offices of the revenue inspectors, tahsildars and block development officers.

Those who took part in the meeting included M.A. Subramanian, District Revenue Officer, S. Chandrasekaran, Lead Bank Manager, P. Sankaralingam, Joint Director of Agriculture, and P. Umamaheswari, Joint Registrar of Co-operative Societies.

### **Geographical indication tag for 'Madurai Malli'**



DISTINCTION:'Madurai Malli' in a farm at Muruganeri near T. Kallupatti in Madurai district.—  
Photo: G. Moorthy

: With its heady fragrance, exclusive size and shape, the 'Madurai Malli's uniqueness has a distinct reputation universally. Farmers from Madurai, Theni, Dindigul, Sivaganga and Virudhunagar districts cultivating 'Madurai Malli' are jubilant as it has been given the Geographical Indication (GI) mark by the Geographical Indications Registry. Application for GI was made in June 2000 and approval came on January 16.

This is the second GI tag for Madurai after 'Madurai Sungudi' and the second for jasmine flower after 'Mysore Malli.'

"This is the first GI tag given to a flower in Tamil Nadu. The tag will give us legal production and prevent unauthorised use of the name by others," said S. Aravindan, secretary of Madurai Malli Farmers' Association.

The application for GI was jointly filed by the Madurai Malli Farmers' Association, Kurinji Vattara Kalanjiam and the DHAN Foundation, Madurai.

Cultivated across 900 acres in Madurai district alone, an average of 489 tonnes of the flower is yielded every year from Madurai. According to C.R. Ananda Kumar, Professor of Department of Plant Breeding and Genetics in the Agricultural College and Research Institute here, the topographical conditions in erstwhile Madurai (that spread across the four other districts) are best suited for the cultivation, making it distinct.

"Madurai Malli has thick petals and strong fragrance. Unlike in other places, the length of the stalk of the flower is equal to that of its petal and is also bulky. This makes it easy for the flower weavers to tie the flowers closer, which is not possible with flowers from other places," he told *The Hindu* .

'Madurai Malli' has six to nine petals and greenish white colour when collected from the plant in the morning. Around noon it turns milky white and then creamy white with a tint of silver shine by evening. Madurai Malli is woven in six different forms, 'uruttu kattu,' 'pattai katti,' 'kadhambam,' 'maalai' and 'thirumbipaar.'

The colour and the fragrance of the flower stay intact for two days due to its thick petal because of delayed anthesis, said Mr. Ananda Kumar. Due to the topography of the region, alkaloids like 'jamone' and 'alpha terpineol' accumulate in the flowers, resulting in the heady fragrance, he added.

"The GI tag will reinforce Madurai Malli's identity in the global market. The tag will help preserve the biodiversity of Madurai and protect the legitimate rights of jasmine farmers," said M.P. Vasimalai, Executive Director of DHAN Foundation.

"Madurai Malli is the pride of Madurai from Sangam age (5th century BC)," Mr Vasimalai added. The flower has been mentioned in Tamil literature like Paripaadal, Madurai Kanchi, Silappathikaram and Kurinji Paattu.

### **Price fluctuation**

The yield of the flower is at its peak between the Tamil months of Chithirai and Aadi. "The price of 'Madurai Malli' goes up to Rs.1000 (sometimes even Rs.2000) per kilogram in the months between Aippasi and Thai, when the yield is low. When the yield is at its peak, the price drops to Rs.10 per kilo gram. The price should be stabilised to protect the interest of farmers," said Mr. Aravindhhan.

Farmers also said the tag would eliminate adulteration when exported.

"Generally 'Madurai Malli' is mixed with jasmine from other places while being exported to countries such as Singapore and the fragrance is lost. Now, if someone does the adulteration, the person might land in jail, in addition to paying a hefty fine", said S. Chinnakanthasamy Naicker, who cultivates jasmine on two acres at Muruganeri, near T. Kallupatti.

"The quantity of 'Madurai Malli' arriving at the flower markets in Madurai has declined over the years. Three years ago, at least 15 tonnes of 'Madurai Malli' arrived at the markets every day between February and November. It has declined by 30 per cent and now it is between 10 to 12 tonnes a day," said N. Jegatheesan, president of Tamil Nadu Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

### **Ideal topography**



The topographical condition of Madurai is ideal for cultivation of Madurai Malli, but the shoots are always nurtured in and around Rameswaram, said farmers.

“Branches are cut from the jasmine plants here are taken to Rameswaram to be nurtured. From there we buy them again. For three months after buying the shoots, we take care of them like our children. During the three months, they require a balanced amount of rain and sunlight. After they are cultivated, they give us yield for 10 to 15 years,” said Mr. Chinnakanthasamy Naicker. One acre of jasmine farm requires 2000 to 3000 shoots, he added.

### **Declare Tuticorin as drought hit: farmers**



study:Collector Ashish Kumar handing over a revolving fund to farmer at the grievance meeting in Tuticorin on Thursday.— Photo: N. Rajesh

Farmers turned out for the grievances day meet convened at the Collectorate on Thursday and pressed their demand for Tuticorin to be declared a drought hit district.

Appealing to Collector Ashish Kumar, district secretary of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam K. P. Perumal said that more than 60 per cent of agriculture was affected due to monsoon failure in 2012. The Collector assured them that a team of officials, who had recently assessed crop failure in the Delta region, would visit Tuticorin and make a similar assessment.

Mr. Kumar said that all their legitimate concerns would be addressed and added that the farmers would be apprised of the team’s arrival much in advance. He pointed out that a 37 per cent deficit in annual rainfall was witnessed in 2012.

Only 450 mm to 460 mm rainfall was recorded against the annual average of 662 mm. About 95 per cent of rainfed cultivation suffered as a result. Irrigation based cultivation saw only a 30 per cent yield.

Kandasamy, a farmer from Srivaikuntam, sought the intervention of the authorities to remove water hyacinths, which had clogged the Srivaikuntam anaicut, the lifeline of farmers.

He also wanted desilting to be executed simultaneously to ensure an uninterrupted flow of water through the channels.

“If this was done, farmers who rely solely on the North and the South main channels for cultivation can raise at least a single crop in a year,” he said.

The Collector instructed the Public Works Department officials to take up the task at the earliest.

Sithavan, of Karupur village, said that the supply channel of a tank in the village should be strengthened.

During the meet, two farmers were provided with a cash award of Rs. 10, 000 each by the Department of Agriculture Marketing.

### **Call to address impact of climate change on crops**

: A continuing research programme on climate change between agriculture scientists of India and the U.S. here stressed the need to address the effect of climate change on field crops and their relevance in plantation crops. Addressing an interactive session at the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute here recently, P.V. Varaprasad, Associate Professor and Director, Great Plains Sorghum Improvement and Utilisation Center, Kansas State University, narrated the impact and adaptability studies being conducted the world over to combat effect of climate change on crops.

He said during the last century, agriculture science and new technology had helped boost production, with enormous gains in yields. There was urgent need to double food availability to meet the demand of the increasing population. It assumed significance at a time when the rate of increase in productivity per hectare for most cereals was decreasing and competition from other sectors was bound to make water availability scarce.

## 'Write off agriculture loans'

Tamizhaga Vivasayeegal Sangam has urged the Union and State Governments to write off agriculture loans. At its monthly meeting held in January, it has urged the State Government to supply fodder at subsidised cost as there was shortage of fodder because of drought.

## Shortage of fodder

It has asked the Government to publish online the monthly cultivation data, as ascertained by the Agriculture and Revenue Departments so that it would bring out the actual figure. Likewise, the Association wants the Government to revisit the subsidy fixed for the drip irrigation.

The farmers' association has also sought fixing guideline value for agriculture lands at a different rate until cultivation was on and not treat them as housing plots. Government should instruct sub registrars in this regard.

## Steps taken to keep fertilizer prices under check: IFFCO



FOCUS ON FERTILIZERS:IFFCO Director and MLA A. Praveen Reddy addressing the regional cooperative conference in Guntur on Thursday.— photo: T. VIJAYA KUMAR

Indian Farmers' Fertilizer Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) Director and Husnabad (Karimnagar) MLA A. Praveen Reddy has called upon farmers to desist from excessively using urea as a substitute for complex fertilizers as it will have adverse impact on soil fertility in the long term.

A steep hike in prices of fertilizers was a cause for concern for farmers but necessary steps were taken by the Central government to keep them (prices) under check, he said.

On its part, IFFCO was promoting micro-nutrients and water-soluble fertilizers to help farmers bring down expenditure on fertilizers and achieve quality yields.

Addressing the IFFCO's regional cooperative conference at the NGO's Home here on Thursday, Mr. Praveen Reddy said the demand for fertilizers in the last couple of years could not be fully met due to constraints in movement of fertilizers and the situation was exploited by some private manufacturers who used the opportunity to jack up prices. "IFFCO is importing raw material from countries where they are relatively cheap and passing on the savings to farmers."

The world's largest fertilizer cooperative federation manufactures and supplies nearly 30 per cent of the fertilizers used in India and it was making efforts to sustain the levels of production at its five manufacturing units (two each in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh and one in Odisha).

### **Tie-up**

In Andhra Pradesh, IFFCO had tied up with MARKFED for storing fertilizers and selling them at subsidised prices with due cooperation from the Agriculture Department.

IFFCO State Marketing Manager Ch. Rama Chandra Reddy said there was a difficulty in moving fertilizers due to non-allotment of berths at Kakinada, Krishnapatnam, and Visakhapatnam ports but the problem has since been solved.

District Cooperative Central Bank (DCCB) Chairman N. Siva Rama Chandrasekhara Rao exhorted the members of cooperative societies to elect those committed to improving the agricultural scenario during the ensuing elections. DCCB General Manager V.V. Subba Reddy, IFFCO Senior Area Manager (Vijayawada) M. Nageswara Rao and others were present.

### **[Palthoni rice yet to taste popularity](#)**



'Palthoni' rice variety harvested at Anakkara in Idukki district.— Photo: Giji K. Raman

Even as farmers elsewhere are on the lookout for high-yielding crop varieties, the farmers of Vandanmedu, over the years, have been preserving an indigenous variety of rice.

'Palthoni', an endemic variety of rice, may not be known beyond the boundaries of this grama panchayat, but is acknowledged as "the tastiest rice" by those who have consumed it.

The cultivation of Palthoni is confined to the 170 to 200 hectares of paddy fields in Kochera, Nettitholu, Anakkara and Chakkupallom areas. Two factors account for its popularity here – the taste and the high level of fodder it generates compared to other varieties like 'Uma' or 'Jyothy'.

The average yield per hectare of 'Palthoni' is 2,500 to 2,700 kg compared to the 6,000 kg per hectare for high-yielding varieties, says Vandanmedu agriculture officer Siby Sebastian. He has studied the features of this indigenous variety and is all praise for its taste. In the preparation of *puttu* (a South Indian breakfast dish), the 'Palthoni' is unmatched, he says.

According to him, this rice variety survived the vagaries of time that befell many exclusive rice varieties in the State due to its generation of large quantities of hay.

A special feature of 'Palthoni' is its height, providing more fodder.

"These are traditional cattle rearing areas," Mr. Sebastian says, adding, "Farmers made more profit from hay than the yield."

However, the total area of paddy cultivation has considerably dwindled with farmers taking to the cultivation of vegetables. But with farmers also involved in cattle rearing activities, the 'Palthoni' remains the preferred variety, he says.

The rice variety is also less prone to disease and requires lesser amounts of fertilizers. The growth period for 'Palthoni' is around 140 days, Mr. Sebastian says. However, when seeds were sown on an experiment basis in low-lying areas in Thodupuzha in the district, it was found that the growth period was around 110 days, he adds.

Farmers here have moved the Kerala Agriculture University to help them get endemic status for the rice.

T.G. Purushothaman, a farmer at Anakkara, told *The Hindu* on Thursday that he preferred 'Palthoni' and has not shifted to other varieties. However, he said efforts are now needed to protect indigenous varieties like 'Palthoni' as Anakkara where it is being cultivated widely is now demarcated for a new airport bypassing a rich agricultural tradition.

His paddy field is now ready for harvest, but the shadow of an uncertain future hangs over him.

### **TN moves apex court for 12 tmcft from Karnataka**

Tamil Nadu on Thursday moved the Supreme Court seeking a directive to Karnataka to release forthwith 12 tmcft of water so that it could save at least a portion of the standing crops in the Cauvery Delta and meet its drinking water requirements.

At its 32 meeting on January 10, the Cauvery Monitoring Committee (CMC) declined to grant any relief to Tamil Nadu.

The case comes up for hearing on February 4.

Tamil Nadu's application said, "At its meeting, the CMC recorded that the deficit in flow during the current water year is 39.7 per cent and found that there is a shortfall of 31.4 tmcft which was to be received by Tamil Nadu as per the interim order of the Cauvery Tribunal and applying the pro-rata release on account of deficit in rainfall."

The CMC, despite holding that there was a deficit of 31.4 tmcft and observing that Karnataka had not regulated the flows as per the award, did not direct the State to release any water from the available storage on account of an arbitrary decision that the available storage of 16 tmcft would be required for drinking water purposes of the State till May 31, 2013, it said.

“The CMC, without appreciating the dire need of Tamil Nadu and also considering the conduct of Karnataka, failed to give any direction to save the standing crops in Tamil Nadu in spite of the fact that during the southwest monsoon period from June to September, 2012, Karnataka did not make good the shortfall in flow due to Tamil Nadu and it had also increased the area in the four major reservoirs and also had withdrawn much more quantity than prescribed in the final order,” it noted.

Tamil Nadu said that out of about 15 lakh acres under the single samba paddy crop in Tamil Nadu, farmers had given up further activities on almost three lakh acres for want of water.

Of the remaining 12 lakh acres, water was required for about nine lakh acres for one irrigation cycle and in about three lakh acres for two irrigation cycles in January/ February, 2013.

### **Cotton Advisory Board recast**

The Union Government has reconstituted the Cotton Advisory Board (CAB), which meets regularly to estimate cotton production, consumption, exports and imports in the country.

The reconstituted CAB will have a consultative committee that will give inputs to the board on the cotton scenario and a core group.

According to an official in the Union Ministry of Textiles, the members of the consultative committee of the reconstituted CAB will include representatives of the government and the stakeholders. Data finalisation, however, will be by a core group of inter-ministerial experts. The list of stakeholders for the consultative process has been increased, and will have members from the textile industry, cotton trade and ginners.

Thus, the government has separated the consultative and data finalisation processes with regard to cotton production, consumption and marketing. The reconstituted CAB will be effective for two years from January 1, 2013. “The CAB will continue to meet in the same way. We are

going to take inputs from the stakeholders. When the data is received, it will be finalised by the core group,” the official said. Both the consultative committee and the CAB will be headed by the Textile Commissioner.

Chairman of the Southern India Mills’ Association S. Dinakaran said the textile industry’s main requirement was stability in cotton prices. Any effort by the government should benefit the cotton farmers and the textile industry.

### **NCDEX in talks with States for mandi modernisation project**

The National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) is in active consultation with various States, including Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, for replicating its mandi modernisation project.

The exchange is implementing a pilot project in Karnataka, covering 15 major mandis out of the 54 agricultural produce market committees and trading in eight commodities. The first phase of automating the mandis has been completed, and inter-linking them is in progress.

The second phase of the project, launched in 2010, involves standardisation of products, including quality assessment, and the third phase comprises development of technology and infrastructure for web-based mandis facilitating national trading. “It is a fairly large pilot aimed at switching an entire State into the model. We are confident of rolling out full-fledged services, primarily aimed at providing better prices to farmers, within a year,” NCDEX Executive Vice-President-South, Ramesh Chand H. C., said.

Attempts to replicate the model in Tamil Nadu were underway while delegations from Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh which inspected the pilot were appreciative of the model.

According to NCDEX Chief Business Officer Vijay Kumar, once mandis were inter-linked and web-based, it would allow traders to trade from any place, and increase competitiveness among farmers. The NCDEX team was here to announce the launch of “Gold 100 gram contract” on Thursday. The contract is based on gold bars of 100 gram with .999 fineness.

### **Three more Vidarbha farmers commit suicide**



Three farmers have committed suicide recently in Vidarbha, according to Vidarbha Jana Andolan Samiti (VJAS), an activist group working in the region.

Ram Shende (32) of Manoli in the Ghatanji division, Sanjay Mahurle of Dorali and Purshottam Parsutkar (45) of Maregaon in Yavatmal district killed themselves, Kishor Tiwari, president of the VJAS, said. While Ram Shende hanged himself in his farm on Monday night, Sanjay Mahurle consumed pesticide. Mahurle was declared dead on reaching hospital.

### **Poultry farms to be set up in seven districts**

*Financial subsidy to come from State and Central governments*

Poultry farming activities such as raising of broilers, layers and country chicken will soon begin in non-poultry farming districts in the State, said Gagandeep Singh Bedi, Secretary, Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries, here on Thursday.

Speaking at the inauguration of 'Livestock and Fisheries' week celebrations at the Veterinary College, Vepery, Mr. Bedi said that the State Government had identified seven districts in the State to take up the work, which would help farmers.

The farming would be taken up in Villupuram, Cuddalore, Ariyalur, Perambalur, Tirunelveli, Tutucorin and Virudhunagar districts. A total of 240 poultry farms would be set up in the seven districts with financial subsidy from State and Central governments. While

138 farms would raise 5,000 poultry heads each in the six districts, the remaining 102 farms would raise 3,000 poultry heads each in Villupuram district.

Apart from this, in another 16 districts the government had provided financial assistance to start country chicken farming in 15 districts – Dindigul, Dharmapuri, Kancheepuram, Kanyakumari, Karur, Krishnagiri, Madurai, Nagapattinam, Pudukottai, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Tiruchi and Vellore.

Each farmer will be given 250 to 500 chicks, he said. Already, 150 poultry farmers in various districts had started infrastructure development work for the farms.

The State would provide subsidy of 25 per cent and the Centre another 25 per cent to the farmers for the infrastructure development. Each farmer could start earning the revenue from the sixth week onwards.

The State is also providing a boost to the veterinary infrastructure. A total of Rs. 122 crore had been allocated for developing the infrastructure in veterinary clinics and dispensaries across the State.

The government, in the last two financial years, allocated Rs. 30 crore each year for the fodder development scheme. It took steps to fill vacancies in the Animal Husbandry Department by appointing 843 veterinarians.

### **Farmer dies**

A farmer, Sambasivam (45), son of Karuppaiah from Alathur south street in Kottur panchayat union, reportedly died of heart attack while inspecting his field on Thursday. He was cultivating half an acre of land taken on lease from Ilanji Chettiar.

### **Three-day rice mela in Mysore from tomorrow**

A group of organic farmers have organised a three-day rice mela here from Saturday. Sahaja Samrudha and Save Our Rice Campaign are organising the mela with the objective of creating awareness about the health benefits of red rice.

It will be held at the Nanjaraja Bahadur Choultry. The mela will feature discussions on the health benefits of red rice, apart from sale of different varieties of rice. The organisers described the event as a celebration of rice heritage.

They said the change in food habits from traditional food to junk had increased health problems among people.

### **Farmers seek water from Amaravathi**

Farmers have now started demanding release of water from Amaravathi and Bhavani reservoirs for saving the standing crops in about two lakh acres in the region between Mettur dam and Grand Anicut.

In a communication to Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, vice president of the agriculturists' wing of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee Puliur A.Nagarajan said that a number of annual crops like banana, sugarcane and betel vines had been raised in this region along with paddy.

But as the small quantum of water released from Mettur dam is being tapped for more than 40 drinking water schemes by sinking giant borewells, the groundwater table in about 30 km, on either side of the Cauvery, has seriously been affected.

This has hurt the crops in those areas. He pointed out that at present, only 700 cusecs is being released from Mettur dam "which is totally insufficient" to save the crops.

However, he said that officials have confided that a very small quantum of water could be released from Mettur dam for the next four months because it is imperative to meet the drinking water needs of these 40-odd schemes. Mr.Nagarajan estimated that if the standing crops were to wither, it would result in a loss of thousands of crores of rupees.

### **Farmer found dead**

Desingu (45), a farmer, was found dead under suspicious circumstances in Ooral village of Rosanai block at Tindivanam on Thursday.

Police sources said that there were traces of frozen blood in his ears and nose. A case of suspicious death has been filed.

### **Good news for women farmers**

This Sankranti festival will be long remembered by thousands of farmers in about 50 villages of Zaheerabad constituency. After a struggle for about two-and-a-half decades, the women farmers of Medak district have accomplished a great thing, beyond their imagination once.

The fields they have been cultivating will be shortly recognised as biodiversity heritage sites (BHS) by the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA). This news came to them on the auspicious

day of Sankranti while they were participating in the first day of the month-long 14th Mobile Biodiversity Festival at Ippapally village in Zaheerabad mandal.

The crop fields of the women of Deccan Development Society, an NGO working for the last 25 years in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh, will be recognized as BHS by the Government of India. This was announced by Balakrishna, Chairman, NBA. When this happens, this will be the first such heritage site in India. The site will cover about 50 villages spread across three mandals in Medak district.

The localised Public Distribution System based on jowar pioneered by DDS for the last 15 years also attracted attention across the nation.

This model of PDS was a byproduct of the rich biodiversity being practiced by the farmers of DDS.

NBS has also decided to propagate this all over the world as one of the best practices based on biodiversity.

# Business Standard

## Sugar production rises 3% to 10.8 mt

Between October and January 15, sugar production in India stood at 10.8 million tonnes (mt), about three per cent more than the year-ago period, said a statement from the [Indian Sugar Mills Association](#). The higher production was despite the fact that 12 sugar mills across the country were shut.

The sugar season runs from October to September. Officials estimate overall sugar production in 2012-13 at 24 mt.

Production in Maharashtra, the country's largest sugar producer, stood at 3.77 mt, about 1,00,000 tonnes less than the year-ago period. While production in Uttar Pradesh stood at about 2.74 mt, against 2.92 mt in the year-ago period, Karnataka produced about two mt, 16 per cent higher than the year-ago period.

Meanwhile, the Confederation of Indian Industry ( [CII](#) ) has urged the government to raise the import duty on sugar. It said despite surplus production in 2012-13, the industry incurred losses due to competition from cheaper imports. Currently, import duty on sugar is 10 per cent. This leads to high imports of raw and processed sugar into the country, as international sugar prices have seen a fall.

## SWEET STORY

- **10.8 mt** Sugar production between October and January 15
- **3.77 mt** Production in Maharashtra
- **2.74 mt** Production in Uttar Pradesh
- **2 mt** Production in Karnataka
- **24 mt** Estimated production in 2012-13

“The government should increase the import duty immediately — from 10 per cent to 30 per cent or more — to create a level playing field for the domestic industry,” said [Ajit Shriram](#), co-chairman, CII task force on sugar, and deputy managing director of DCM Shriram Consolidated.

THE HINDU  
**Business Line**

Jain Irrigation plans university for water management



B.H. Jain

**Mumbai, Jan. 17:**

From rain-starved Jalgaon in Maharashtra to Watertown in the US, Jain Irrigation may have gone places, but its 75-year-old founder-chairman, Bhavarlal Hiralal Jain, says they have just managed to scratch the surface.

There is huge potential for corporates in the agriculture sector as water gets scarcer in the coming days, he feels.

Jain puts in eight to 13 hours strategising his vision of setting up a university that will focus exclusively on water management, renewable energy and sustainable agriculture.

Each of these subjects is covered separately in different universities and colleges, but the university planned by Jain will inculcate knowledge on these subjects at one point through practical experience.

Jain is confident that students passing out of this university would be most sought after given the shortage of quality talent in the agriculture sector.

“It will definitely be more attractive than IT or any other sector. We are looking at just 500 students a year; we can absorb half of them ourselves. But our intention is that each student should become an entrepreneur,” he said.

Jain has the experience of running the ICSE residential Anubhuti School on 100 acres at Jalgaon.

## **FUNDING PLANS**

With regards to funding, help seems to be coming from within the family.

“My four sons have already agreed to transfer 80 per cent of their holding to a yet to be formed trust which will finance and operate the university. This will not only fund the university, but also lead to clarity on ownership of Jain Irrigation in the long run,” said Jain.

An ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi’s principals, Jain wants to replicate the Tata Group ownership structure for Jain Irrigation. The trust will perform the role of Tata Sons in driving growth across group companies.

Jain Irrigation has 27 agriculture-based manufacturing plants of which 15 are located overseas.

### **For society**

Farmer suicides, climatic changes, erratic rainfall and poor agriculture growth apart, Jain believes that investments in the farm sector can still be profitable if the intention is to leave something for society.

“When I started my business venture in 1963 with an investment Rs 7,000, I never dreamt that the business would grow to what it is now. But my objective was always to touch the life of the people in the lowest strata of the society,” he said.

For instance, when the company acquired the first piece of land in Jalgaon, it was about 150 feet high and people thought it was a disastrous decision.

“Forget about the difficulty in sourcing water at that height, we had to follow donkeys to find the easiest path to reach the top. They have the inherent strength of finding the right way to top,” he quips.



Today, Jain Hills houses high-tech agriculture parks, biotech and tissue culture laboratories, green houses, gomata ashram, fruit processing, onion dehydration, bio-fuel and solar energy plants and many other agricultural experimental sites.

### **FMC to implement food safety standards for farm items**

**Kochi, Jan. 17:**

The Forward Markets Commission is examining the quality of farm commodities offered for trading on commodity bourses. It is also looking into the feasibility of adopting standard food safety measures for the traded agri-contracts.

The decision comes in the backdrop of Food Safety and Standards Authority sealing six NCDEX-accredited warehouses in Kerala last month following complaints of adulteration of black pepper stocks. “We are examining the quality specification of futures contracts of agriculture commodities. We are also exploring the feasibility of incorporating standards formulated by Food Safety Authority, Bureau of Indian Standard and Agmark,” Ramesh Abhishek, Chairman, FMC, said in a statement issued here.

On the sealing of warehouses, he said the FMC has asked NCDEX to take up the matter with the State Government and Food Safety Authority for early resolution. Earlier this week, NCDEX had said it will resolve the issue at the earliest in line with the exchange's regulations. Meanwhile, the Food Safety Authority has asked Spices Board to examine the samples of the black pepper.

Biju Prabhakar, Commissioner – Food Safety (Kerala), said that the authority has issued notice to NCDEX to ensure that stock does not enter the market. The stock in the warehouses was about 8,000 tonnes. “With one or two samples, we cannot declare the entire stock as adulterated because the commodity belongs to small and medium farmers. We need to examine carefully,” he said.

With seizure of six warehouses in Kerala, black pepper traders of NCDEX have made representation to commodity market regulator FMC and also to the exchange demanding delivery of valid goods or refund the value of the pepper, estimated to be about Rs 300 crore.

### **Exporters' buying spreads aroma to jeera futures**



**Rajkot, Jan 17:**

Jeera futures prices increased on good export buying in the spot market.

However, prices remained steady in spot on good sowing report.

According to analysts, the overall trend is positive and the price may increase in the coming days.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), jeera March contract improved by Rs 115 to Rs 14,017.50 a quintal, with an open interest of 12,069 lots.

NCDEX jeera April contract gained Rs 105 at Rs 14,055 for a quintal, with an open interest of 5,040 lots.

Jeera future prices opened higher extending previous day's gains but corrected sharply in the later part of the day due to profit taking. However, prices recovered sharply towards the end due to fresh enquiries.

Jeera traded flat in spot market. Jeera medium quoted at Rs 2,280-2,380 for 20 kg,

NCDEX quality raw quoted at Rs 2,600-2,700 at Unjha market of Gujarat.

Arrival stood at 3,000 bags and traded around 5,000 bags.

According to Gujarat Agriculture Department, sowing in Gujarat so far has been reported at 3.24 lakh hectares compared with 3.64 lakh hectares last year.

In Rajasthan, sowing is expected to increase by 10-15 per cent.

According to market analysts, jeera prices may trade sideways with a positive bias.

Fresh export enquiries may support prices.

Demand from domestic traders and millers at lower levels may also support prices.

However, higher sowing figures in Gujarat may pressurise prices.

In the medium term, prices are likely to stay firm as Syria and Turkey have stopped shipments.

### **Govt okays open policy for export of processed foods**

**New Delhi, Jan. 17:**

The Government on Thursday decided to allow uninterrupted export of processed or value-added agricultural products in the event of a ban or restriction on shipments of basic farm produce.

The uninterrupted export of such processed food products is expected to be regulated by duty. The list of exportable goods includes processed foods from agricultural commodities, such as wheat, rice, onion and milk.

Exports of processed or value-added products constitute a miniscule portion of overall exports and hence, their continuation would not affect the availability in the domestic market owing to very marginal processing capacity in the country, an official statement said.

“An always open policy of this sector will not only help reduce wastage of perishable products but also encourage value addition,” the statement said.

Exports of agricultural and processed foods have almost doubled to Rs 86,018 crore in 2011-12 from Rs 43,727 crore in 2011-12.

With respect to farm product exports, India's image has been that of an irregular supplier due to the frequent ban on shipments of grains and milk products in the past few years. The Government has opened up export of rice and wheat since September 2011 and has emerged a large exporter of these commodities since then.

### Mustard drops as new crop arrival looms



**Indore, Jan 17:**

With the arrival of new mustard seeds in mandis barely a fortnight away, demand in mustard oil continues to be slack, leading to further fall in its prices from the last week. For the past 3-4 days, mustard oil is ruling stable across Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

However, compared with last week, prices are down by Rs 8 in Indore at Rs 762 for 10 kg. Similarly it is ruling Rs 10 each in Neemuch and Morrena from last week at Rs 755 and Rs 765 respectively. In Rajasthan also, mustard oil ruled at Rs 770 each in Kota and Ganga Nagar and in Jaipur at Rs 785; In Gujarat also was down Rs 10 at Rs 760.

In the past fortnight, mustard oil has fallen by Rs 16 in Indore mandis.

Downtrend in mustard oil is further anticipated in the coming days as new mustard seeds start hitting mandis, said a trader here. Mustard seeds have also declined in Indore by Rs 200 in the past one week on slack demand and buying support. Currently it is ruling at Rs 4,300-4,500, while raida at Rs 3,600-3,800. In Neemuch also, mustard seeds are ruling stable at Rs 3,550-3,700 amid bumper crop prospect. Plant deliveries for Jaipur line quoted at Rs 4,175-90 a quintal

(marginally lower from the last week). Ahead of monthly cuts in the future market tomorrow, mustard seeds January contract on the NCDEX crashed to Rs 4,090 (down Rs 100).

However, April contract on the NCDEX closed Rs 31 up at Rs 3,434 on improved buying support.

Arrival of mustard seeds in the country was recorded at 70,000 bags with 4,000 being offloaded in Madhya Pradesh, 6,000 in Uttar Pradesh, 40,000 bags in Rajasthan, 8,000 bags in Punjab and Haryana, 2,000 in Gujarat and the remaining 10,000 elsewhere in the country.

### **Coastal farmers advised not to overuse urea**

**Guntur, Jan. 17:**

Farmers in the coastal Andhra Pradesh districts are tending to overuse urea, which is not desirable, as it may adversely affect soil fertility in the long run, according to A. Praveen Reddy, one of the Directors of Indian Farmers' Fertiliser Co-operative Ltd (IFFCO).

He was addressing farmers and others at the regional co-operative conference of IFFCO here on Thursday. He said farmers in these areas were using urea as a substitute for complex fertilisers and excessive use of nitrogen may affect the soil. He advised farmers to apply fertilisers properly taking into account the soil conditions and the requirements of the crop. He said IFFCO was promoting micro-nutrients and water-soluble fertilisers to help farmers in bringing down expenditure on fertilisers and to improve yields.

He said demand for fertilisers in Andhra Pradesh could not be fully met during the past two years, due to constraints in movement of fertilisers such as non-availability of railway rakes. He said IFFCO was the world's largest fertiliser co-operative federation, supplying nearly 30 per cent of the fertiliser used in the country, and it had set up five manufacturing units in the country - two apiece in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh and one in Orissa. In Andhra Pradesh, IFFCO had tied up with the AP Markfed for storing and supplying fertilisers.

IFFCO state marketing manager Ch. Ramachandra Reddy said there was difficulty last year in moving fertilisers, as there was congestion at ports in the State and also due to rake shortage, but the problem had since been solved.

### **Help agri coops recoup losses**

Cooperative societies came into force under the influence of the English Friendly Societies Act of 1886. In India, the act came into existence on March 25, 1904, to control cooperative credit societies.

The main mission of these societies was to promote farmers, make them self-sufficient, and improve their economic status. .

The cooperative societies are classified into two categories in terms of lending, i.e., Primary Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies (PACs) and Primary Cooperative Agricultural and Rural Development Bank (PCARDB). PACs are for the short-term, i.e., less than one year, and PCARDBs are for long-term credit up to 15 years.

Both borrow from NABARD at the rate of 9 per cent per annum, and they lend to farmers at the rate of 12 per cent per annum. Of this, farmers have to pay annually 3 per cent interest on their borrowings and remaining 9 per cent is borne by the Government as subsidy. The other financial source of these banks are shareholders' funds.

The banks provide good credit worthiness to farmers in different schemes according to their requirements but the main problem pertains to recovery.

The first reason for losses that occur in cooperative societies is from the farmers' side because of failure of crops, drought, heavy rainfall and the fact that the Government does not provide a good market price for the crops grown by the farmers. At present what income they receive for their crops is not equal to the total cost of their expenditure. Farmers' economic condition is not good at present and so they are migrating from agriculture. Therefore, income from agriculture to GDP is decreasing day by day.

The second reason for loss comes from the political leaders and their waiver of loans and waiver of interest rates. Although they pass this resolution easily, they are not able refund the

amount in time to the cooperative institutions and this causes heavy dues in the cooperative societies.

At present, the Government is providing subsidies and all benefits to farmers but such benefits do not fulfill the requirements of farmers in an efficient manner.

If we consider farmers to be the backbone of our nation, the Government has to take necessary steps to uplift their living status by providing a good market price for their crops. This will gradually motivate farmers to increase their output and also help them repay their loans in time to the cooperative banks. Further, if the politicians able refund the waiver amount in time to the cooperative banks within the stipulated time, only then will the cooperative banks be able to overcome their losses.

### **'Hike MRP of urea, slash potash fertiliser prices'**

The Government should hike retail prices of urea by Rs 750 a tonne, get the industry to reduce the same on di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) and muriate of potash (MOP) by Rs 1,000 and Rs 1,500 a tonne respectively, and stop giving any subsidy on imported fertilisers for one year.

These measures together will help it realise over Rs Rs 22,000 crore worth of subsidy savings, without harming the farmer while also providing some respite to a cash-strapped industry, according to the Managing Director of the country's largest nutrients supplier, Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (Iffco), U.S. Awasthi.

"As on January 1, the country has roughly 6 million tonnes (mt) stocks of DAP and various NPK complexes. We can easily afford not to import any more of these nutrients for one year. That can be done by completely dispensing with subsidy on their imports," he told *Business Line*.

During the current fiscal till January 15, India has imported 5.77 mt of DAP and 0.4 mt of complexes.

Taking an average subsidy concession of Rs 14,100 a tonne, the Government can straightaway save Rs 8,700 crore, not to speak of \$3.4 billion of reduced foreign exchange outgo at a landed import price of \$550 a tonne.

### **Imported urea subsidy**

Similarly with urea, the Government can stop giving any subsidy on imports amounting to more than 15 per cent of domestic production. So, if India is producing 20 mt, it means limiting imports to 3 mt, whereas it has already touched 7.7 mt so in 2012-13.

The subsidy (base concession) given on imported urea is about Rs 18,000 a tonne. On the excess imports of five mt, the savings from not granting any subsidy will work out to another Rs 9,000 crore.

“We must take a policy decision to stop giving subsidy on imported DAP/complexes for a year (given ample stocks) and urea beyond 3 mt. It will lead to subsidy savings of some Rs 18,000 crore,” Awasthi added.

Over and above this, he suggested raising the maximum retail price (MRP) of urea by Rs 750, from the existing Rs 5,265 a tonne.

### **savings**

The Government can also reduce the concession on DAP and MOP by Rs 1,000 a tonne each, which will, in turn, translate into lower subsidy rates on N, P and K. The savings from this would come to nearly Rs 4,700 crore.

The annual subsidy savings from all these together would work out to over Rs 22,000 crore.

As regards farmers, Awasthi said that given the possibility of contracting imported fertilisers (mainly potash) and raw materials at lower prices this year, the industry would be in a position to reduce the MRP of DAP by Rs 1,000 and of MOP by Rs 1,500 a tonne.

This will adequately compensate for the increase in the MRP of urea by Rs 750 a tonne. In any case, farmers in many parts of the country are paying Rs 7,000 or more for every tonne of this nutrient, as against the official MRP of Rs 5,365.

“When you price something artificially so long, this is bound to happen down the distribution chain, on which we have no much control,” he noted.

The Rs 22,000 crore-plus savings from the above proposals, Awasthi said, will also help the industry.



“The budgeted subsidy of Rs 65,000 crore for 2012-13 has already been overshoot by Rs 22,000 crore till December. For the remaining three months, we will require another Rs 11,000 crore.

The Government will have to do something fast because we just cannot manage with such large outstanding dues, which has to be covered by borrowing from banks. Ultimately, it means paying subsidy to the banks as well”, he quipped.

### Record price for broiler as feed turns costlier



**Chennai, Jan. 17:**

Buoyed by strong demand, higher feed prices and the onset of winter, broiler prices touched Rs 78/kg crossing the previous record price of Rs 75/kg scaled in 2011.

Soaring feed prices that account for one-third of cost of production is also attributed as a reason to the steady rise in prices - a 75-kg bag of broiler feed cost Rs 2,702.50 in 2012 against Rs 1,894 the previous year.

Meanwhile, egg prices and layer prices also inched up owing to pick-up in retail demand.

The National Egg Coordination Committee (Namakkal zone) has increased the price of an egg by two paise to Rs 3.42 a piece and that of layer birds to Rs 41 (Rs 35).

But despite the price rise and plummeting mercury levels in the North, wholesale egg prices are not picking up due to overproduction of the commodity.

Farmers claim that the existing wholesale price of Rs 3.42 is forcing them to incur loss due to high cost of production.

For over two weeks, the wholesale price of egg has remained at Rs. 3.40.

In December 2012, the daily production of eggs in Namakkal posted a decade-high at 353.60 lakhs.

The over production has been estimated at 15 per cent across India and farmers are advised to bring down production of eggs by selling the old hens for meat at an earlier stage.

Namakkal and Palladam prices are the benchmarks for eggs and chicken respectively in the country.

### **Govt to re-impose Customs duty on crude edible oil**

Oil palm growers will get higher price; global prices may drop



**New Delhi, Jan. 17:**

Buckling under pressure from the domestic edible oil sector, the Government has decided to impose a 2.5 per cent duty on imports of crude edible oils.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Thursday approved the levy of import duty, which has been done with the objective to shore up the price payable to farmers for fresh fruit bunches of oil palm, which is linked to the landed price of crude palm oil (CPO).

With enhanced duty on CPO, price payable to farmers will increase by around Rs 150 a tonne, an official statement said.

The impact of the enhanced duty on prices of edible oils would be negligible at less than Re 1 a kg, the Government said.

The price may be further moderated on account of the huge stocks of palm oil in Malaysia and Indonesia, which may force these countries to lower the export duty currently levied in an effort to boost their exports.

At present, all refined oil imports are taxed at 7.5 per cent, while crude edible oil imports are duty-free.

The domestic industry led by the Solvent Extractors Association of India has been demanding a levy of 10 per cent tax on crude palm oil and raise the tax on refined, bleached and deodorised palmolein to 20 per cent for some time now.

### **tariff defreeze**

The CCEA also approved a plan to defreeze the tariff values of all edible oils, palm oil – crude and refined, and soyabean oil – crude and notify their tariff values on the basis of their prevailing international prices.

An alignment of notified tariff values with international prices will have a positive impact on the duty collected from import of edible oils and will provide an even-field to the domestic refining industry, the statement said.

### **rising imports**

Edible oil imports have been on the rise on growing domestic consumption.

For the oil year ending October 2012, India's imports stood at almost 10 million tonnes.

The edible oil imports were up 35 per cent in December 2012 at 9 lakh tonnes over corresponding period last year's 6.69 lakh tonnes.

### **[NCDEX to launch e-tendering system for Karnataka mango market](#)**

#### **HYDERABAD, JAN 17:**

The National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) is all set to launch a web-based e-tendering system for Srinivasapura mango market in Karnataka, which is considered as one of the biggest markets for the fruit in the country, a top NCDEX official said on Thursday.

This is the first time that the exchange has taken up a commodity that is highly perishable.

Ramesh Chand, Executive Vice President (South) said the exchange is also mulling to launch similar initiatives for Pomegranate and Kismis (dry grapes).

The platform, called E-mandi, will also be available on mobile phones and is aimed at bringing mango pulp makers and farmers at one place, Chand said.

“Our model is ready and we need to train farmers how to participate, how to bring lots... because the plucking will not be done on a single day,” Chand told reporters at a press conference here.

“We are planning to conduct hourly tenders for 12 varieties of mangoes. 60 per cent of mango produce is Totapuri variety which normally goes for pulping and from there to beverage makers,” he added.

According to the official, as much as 45,000 metric tonnes of mango is expected to arrive at Srinivasapura market and as a consequence of the perishable nature of the commodity, a high commission is charged from the farmer.

E-mandi will eliminate the high commission regime as an independent assaying agency will do the grading, based on which pricing is dependent, Chand said.

After the mango market, we want to try pomegranate and raisins markets in Bagalkot and Bijapur, he said.

**Madurai Malli gets GI tag**



**Business Line** The certificate granting the GI protection to the jasmine flower would be given at a function to be held at Madurai sometime in April.

#### **CHENNAI, JAN 17:**

‘Madurai Malli’, the popular jasmine flower known for its heady fragrance and international reputation bringing special fame to the temple city of Madurai, has been given the Geographical Indication mark.

“Madurai Malli has been granted the GI tag by the GI registry,” Chinnaraja G. Naidu, Assistant Registrar of Trade Mark and GI, said.

The certificate granting the GI protection to the jasmine flower would be given at a function to be held at Madurai sometime in April, he said.

The traditional jasmine flower is cultivated in the districts of Madurai, Virudhunagar, Theni, Dindigul and Sivaganga.

Special characteristics of the Madurai Malli are deep fragrance, thick petals, lengthiest petiole and delayed opening of buds, ensuring longer shelf-life of the flower.

The registration gives a legal protection for the growers who need not go for further individual registration, he said, adding, that those involved in the cultivation were only entitled to use the word “Madurai Malli”.

Naidu said unauthorised use of the registration would lead to two years imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs one lakh.

The GI registration has been granted following applications made by Madurai Malli Farmers' Association and DHAN Foundation following which the Chennai office of the Geographical Indication Registry had sought objections from the public.

The growers have welcomed the decision.

### **Retail traders shy away from rice market**



#### **Karnal, Jan 17:**

The rice market witnessed a steady trend, with the prices of aromatic and non-basmati rice ruling firm on the previous levels on Thursday.

After witnessing a fall earlier this week, aromatic and non-basmati rice varieties managed to maintain their previous levels amidst slack trading, said Tara Chand Sharma, proprietor of Tara Chand and Sons.

Retail traders are keeping away from the market as they are reluctant to make fresh purchase on current levels, he said.

According to the market sources, market may rule range-bound for the next few days. Uncertain weather and heavy rainfall in the province are also hitting the trade.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) went for Rs 7,100 a quintal; Pusa-1121 (sela) at Rs 6,130; pure basmati (raw) Rs 8,100; duplicate basmati (steam) Rs 5,700; Sharbati (steam) Rs 4,380 and Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 4,300.

PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 2,550-2,650; PR-11 (raw) Rs 2,550-2,600; Permal (raw) Rs 2,200-2,300 and Permal (sela) at Rs 2,150-2,300.

### **Paddy Arrivals**

Paddy arrivals dropped to just around 5,000 bags at the Karnal grain market terminal on Thursday.

About 1,000 bags of PR variety were sold at Rs 1,250, 2,000 bags Sharbati were quoted at Rs 2,150.

About 2,000 bags of Pusa-1121 were quoted at Rs 3,550.

### **High input costs lead to build-up of cane arrears in UP**

Cane arrears have begun to build up in Uttar Pradesh, where sugar millers are reeling under the impact of high cane costs and a bearish trend in the prices of the sweetener.

Till date, cane arrears in the current sugar season, starting October, are hovering around Rs 2,987 crore in UP, according to the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA). Higher supplies and inflow of cheaper sugar from countries such as Pakistan and Brazil have led to a bearish trend in prices.

Sugar mills in the State are incurring a loss of around Rs 4,000 a tonne, as the cost of production is around Rs 36,000 a tonne due to high State advised price for cane at Rs 280 a quintal, whereas the market price of the sweetener is around Rs 32,000 a tonne.

Sugar production till mid-January is up by about 3 per cent at 108 lakh tonnes (lt) aided by higher cane crushing in Karnataka and Maharashtra. In the corresponding period last year, sugar output stood at 105 lt.

In Maharashtra, production of the sweetener is up by 3 per cent at 37.70 lt with a recovery of around 10.5 per cent, same as that of last year.

However in Uttar Pradesh, production is lower by 6 per cent despite better recovery as mills started crushing late. In Karnataka, sugar output was up 16 per cent at 20 lt over corresponding last year.

The industry, meanwhile, has stepped up its demand for increasing import duty on both processed and raw sugar. This is even as the inflow of cheaper sugar in large quantities from countries such as Pakistan and Brazil is hurting the local producers. At present, the import duty on sugar is pegged at 10 per cent.

Ajit Shriram, Deputy Managing Director, DCM Shriram Consolidated and Co-chairman, CII Task Force on Sugar, said the sugar industry is already suffering owing to excessive controls of the Central and State Governments, coupled with recent hikes in cane price across the country.

“Inexpensive import due to low duty is adding to heavy losses. The Government should increase the import duty immediately from 10 per cent to 30 per cent or more to create a level playing field for the domestic industry,” he said.

The import duty on sugar was progressively reduced to 10 per cent per cent from 60 per cent in 2009 when demand outstripped supply by a huge margin. However, the situation has now reversed and sugar companies are already hit by high cane prices fixed by the Government.

### **Sugar industry seeks hike in import duty**

The sugar industry has urged the Government to increase import duty on sugar to 30 per cent from 10 per cent to protect domestic companies from cheap imports. Besides low duty, the sharp drop in international sugar prices has also led to large quantity of raw and processed sugar imports.

Domestic sugar production is expected to touch about 24 million tonnes (mt) this year against the demand of 22.5 mt. The production will exceed demand despite scanty rains in key growing States such as Maharashtra and Karnataka.



Ajit Shriram, Deputy Managing Director, DCM Shriram Consolidated and Co-chairman, CII Task Force on Sugar, said the sugar industry is already suffering owing to excessive controls of the Central and State Governments, coupled with recent hikes in cane price across the country.

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The import duty on sugar was progressively reduced to 10 per cent per cent from 60 per cent in 2009 when demand outstripped supply by a huge margin. However, the situation has now reversed and sugar companies are already hit by high cane prices fixed by the Government.

P. Ramababu, Co-Chairman, CII Task Force on Sugar, said the viability of the entire industry is at stake with large scale imports of processed sugar from Pakistan and raw sugar mainly from Brazil.

Sugar production cost in Uttar Pradesh works out to Rs 36,000 a quintal with State Advised Price of Rs 280 a quintal for sugar cane. The sugar price currently hovers around Rs 32,000-33,000 a tonne, leading to a net loss of about Rs 4,000 produced in the State. With sugar production estimate of 79 lakh tonnes, producers in the State will incur a loss of Rs 3,000 crore this year alone, he said.

### **Sugar futures up at Rs 3,255 a quintal**



Sugar futures gained marginally by 0.03 per cent to Rs 3,255 a quintal at 2.10 p.m. Demand seems to have emerged with the prices falling sharply in the last few days.

Reports of drought in parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka have hurt fresh sugarcane planting, which may affect cane availability in the sugar year 2013-14 starting October.

The Government has allocated 70 lakh tonnes of non-levy sugar quota for December-March period which is higher from 59.5 lakh tonnes allotted last year.

### **Sugar output**

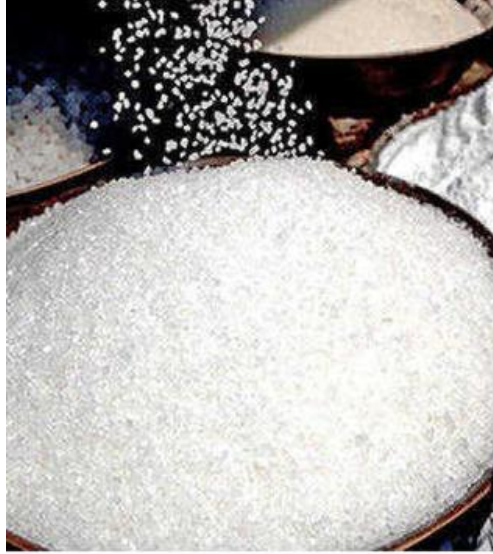
Mills in the country have produced 7.96 million tonnes of sugar in the first three months of the season, up nearly 2.5 per cent from a year ago.

In Maharashtra, the largest sugar producer in the country, 155 mills are operational and have produced 1.88 mt till December 15 compared with 1.83 mt produced a year ago by 165 mills.

In Uttar Pradesh, the second largest sugar producer in the country, the total output as on December 15 was 1.03 mt, about 20 per cent lower compared to last year.

Sugar prices may recover in the coming weeks as demand is seen emerging at lower levels. Reports of lower cane planting in some parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka may also bring some stability in prices.

**Sugar output till mid-Jan up 3% at 108 lakh tonnes**



**NEW DELHI, JAN 17:**

Sugar production till mid-January was up by about 3 per cent at 108 lakh tonnes aided by higher cane crushing in Karnataka and Maharashtra.

In the corresponding period last year, the output stood at 105 lakh tonnes.

In Maharashtra, the production was up 3 per cent at 37.70 lakh tonnes, according to the Indian Sugar Mills Association. In Karnataka, the output was up 16 per cent at 20 lakh tonnes over the corresponding period last year.

However in Uttar Pradesh, the production was lower by 6 per cent despite a higher recovery as mills started crushing late.

Amid a bearish trend in sugar prices, cane arrears have begun to build-up and are hovering at Rs 2,987 crore till date.