



### **Krishi Vigyan Kendra to organise training programmes**

**The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Namakkal has organised free one-day training programmes at the Kendra on farming allied activities on its premises on the Mohanur Road.**

On January 24, a training programme on freshwater prawn culture will be organised. A training programme on “turkey rearing on profitable basis” has been organised on January 29. Training on broiler farming has been organised on January 31, where participants will be provided training on varieties of chicken reared in farms, putting up a shed, feeding the chicken, how to protect the birds from getting infected and on marketing the birds/ meat. Interested persons can enrol themselves by contacting KVK personnel at the latest before 5 p.m. on the day before the programme is organised. Registration can also be made over phone at 04286-266345, 266244 or 266650.

### **Farmers want crop loans waived**

*Over 2000 farmers observe a fast*

More than 2000 farmers observed a fast here on Tuesday urging the government to waive the crop loans obtained from the nationalised banks in the State.

A large number of farmers in the State were severely affected following the monsoon failure this year. Many suffered heavy losses as their crops withered due to shortage of water. As a result, the farming community was not in position to repay the crop loans taken from the banks.

The Central and State governments should waive the crop loans and announce relief to the drought-affected farmers, protesters said.

The governments should consider providing at least Rs. 40,000 per acre as relief to the drought affected farmers, they demanded.

Participating in the protest, Bharatiya Janata Party State President Pon Radhakrishnan criticised the Central government for not paying adequate attention on the welfare of the farming community in the country. The Congress-led government at the Centre had been promoting policies which were adversely affecting the farmers, he said.

Mr. Radhakrishnan further said that the government should nationalise the rivers in order to sort out the inter-state water disputes.

Other demands of the agitators included fixing of Rs. 3,500 as the minimum support price for sugarcane and concrete measures to ensure remunerative prices for all the agricultural produce.

Representatives of various farmers associations in the district participated in the protest.

### **Tenders soon for new wholesale vegetable market, says Mayor**

*It will come up on six acres at Kavundampalayam*



Coimbatore Mayor S.M. Velusamy inspecting the site proposed for the wholesale vegetable market near Kavundampalayam, on Tuesday.– Photo: M. Periasamy

The Coimbatore Corporation will in the next 10 days float tenders to commence work on a new vegetable market, Mayor S.M. Velusamy has said.

The Corporation will establish the market, meant only for wholesale traders, at the place where the Kavundampalayam dump yard existed.

Mr. Velusamy told reporters here on Tuesday that the Commissioner in-charge S. Sivarasu, City Engineer G. Karunakaran, Executive Engineers K. Sugumar and A. Lakshmanan and he were there to inspect the site and discuss the plan.

The Corporation would ask the contractor to establish the market with 170 shops on the southern side of the plot.

The arrangement would be in such a way that there would be sufficient space for parking, both heavy vehicles and light vehicles, including two-wheelers.

Mr. Sivarasu said that the Corporation would establish the 170 shops in such a way that each shop had 400 sq ft and the total area was 70,000 sq ft. In short, the civic body would establish the market on over six acres at Rs. 12 crore.

He said that the original plan was to have the market on the northern side of the plot. But after considering various aspects, keeping in mind the expansion plans and Mayor's suggestion, the Corporation had planned to shift the market to the southern side. The area the Corporation had proposed for the market was more than twice the existing wholesale market area, which was 3.40 acres. The market had 112 shops.

Mr. Velusamy asked the officials to ensure that the market complex had more than one entrance and exit and separate ones for heavy vehicles so as to have smooth entry and exit of vehicles.

Once the Corporation completed the market, it would ask the traders in the wholesale market to shift their shops so that the space was available for construction of shops for retail vegetable vendors.

He said that the civic body would construct shops to accommodate the 300 or more retailers at the market, which was on the Mettupalayam Road near the Saibaba Colony Police Station. Mr.

Sivarasu said that the wholesale market at Kavundampalayam would not have concrete roof, given the soil strength, weakened by layers of garbage.

The new retail market, however, would have concrete roof.

Once the Corporation completed the wholesale market, traffic congestion on the busy Mettupalayam Road would comedown to a great extent. And it would further improve once the retail market was also in place.

### **KMF seeks a hike of Rs. 4 a litre**



Farmers staging a protest in front of the KMF office in Bangalore on Monday. According to KRRS leader Kodihalli Chandrashekar, the farmers are only 'temporarily happy' with the proposed hike.— Photo: K. Gopinathan

Nandini milk consumers may be forced to dig deeper into their pockets shortly as the Karnataka Milk Federation on Monday resolved to seek a hike of Rs. 4 per litre of milk, citing increasing production cost to farmers. However, the State government will have a say eventually on the quantum of hike to be effected, that is likely from February 1.

If the Rs. 4 per litre hike, proposed in the KMF's board meeting chaired by Chairman G. Somashekar Reddy is accepted by the government, the largest sold toned milk variety will cost Rs. 28. Not only would the cost of milk go up, but also other essential milk products such as ghee and curd.

“The board resolution will be sent to the government. The federation has normally hiked the milk price with the concurrence of the government, and we hope our resolution would be accepted this time also,” a senior KMF official told *The Hindu*. According to the official, since the matter is of sensitive nature, it may have to be approved by the Cabinet.

Another official said that the hike was imperative since the cost of diesel, electricity and cattle feed among others had seen an increase. “Even other States would start increasing the price in the near future.” Farmers, who are getting anywhere between Rs. 17 and Rs. 19 per litre of milk (depending on the respective milk union), stand to gain with the bulk of the proposed hike going to them.

The KMF currently is grappling with the problem of handling excess milk. While it currently procures about 45 lakh kg of milk, it sells about 32 lakh litres as milk while another 7 to 8 lakh litres is used for dairy products such as ghee, curd, butter milk and Nandini sweet products among others, leaving about 5 to 6 lakh kg in excess.

“Excess milk touched nearly 15 lakh kg daily a few months back as procurement went up since many private dairies are not accepting milk from farmers due to higher cost. This resulted in production of skimmed milk powder (SMP) in recent months, the stocks of which has reached a gigantic 18,000 metric tonnes.”

Meanwhile, Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha leader Kodihalli Chandrashekar, who led a farmers’ protest in front of KMF here on Monday, said that the farmers were only “temporarily happy” with the proposed hike. “In the long run, we want the federation to give us scientific price taking into considering the production cost. We will press for additional support to the farmers during the meeting with Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar on Tuesday.”

He further said that they had suggested that Rs. 2 subsidy per litre of milk that the government is giving farmers could be adjusted against the cattle feed, which farmers buy from KMF.

The farmers called off the protest after Mr. Reddy came out of the KMF board meeting and announced the proposal to hike milk price.

### **“Motivate tribals to cultivate mushrooms”**

: The diet of indigenous people is catching the attention of experts in the field of nutrition.

A team led by G. Johnsy of the Centre for Advanced Studies in Botany in the University of Madras highlighted the nutritional value of 10 edible mushrooms, which form part of the food culture of the Kaani tribals in the forests of Kanyakumari district.

Analysis revealed that the mushrooms were rich sources of protein and carbohydrates and low on fat.

“Mushroom is a major menu in their food culture, though its availability is seasonal. With the Kanyakumari district receiving two monsoons and high cost of meat, fish and vegetables, the tribals go in search of mushrooms just after the monsoons,” said a team member, S. Davidson Sarguna.

Another member M.K. Dinesh has appealed to the Government to motivate the Kanni people to cultivate mushrooms not only for food but also commercially.

### **Mysugar to start clearing cane growers' dues from February**



Seeking dues: Sugarcane growers, under the aegis of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha, staging a demonstration outside the Mysugar premises in Mandya on Tuesday.

State-owned Mysore Sugar Company Ltd. (Mysugar) has assured Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) members of starting to settle the dues of sugarcane growers — over Rs. 34 crore — from the first week of February.

More than 200 sugarcane growers, under the aegis of the KRRS, staged a demonstration outside Mysugar premises here on Tuesday demanding that the company clear the dues pending since two years. The State-run factory, according to the KRRS, is yet to pay for the sugarcane supplied during the crushing seasons in 2010-11 and 2011-12.

The growers gathered outside the factory and shouted slogans against the management. When they insisted on speaking to managing director Naveen Kumar on the issue, security personnel closed the entrance.

Mr. Naveen and other officials met the farmers later and assured them of starting the process of settling the dues from the first week of February.

KRRS leader Shambhuna Halli Suresh told *The Hindu* that if the factory paid the dues, it would help growers to tide over financial problems.

The agitators threatened to launch 'jail bharo' agitation if the dues were not settled within two weeks.

### **MLA's request**

Hours after the protest, Melkote MLA C.S. Puttaraju met Mandya Deputy Commissioner B.N. Krishnaiah to discuss the issue. Mr. Puttaraju requested Mr. Krishnaiah to initiate measures to clear the dues.

Mandya City Municipal Council president M.P. Arun Kumar and the former MLA H.B. Ramu were part of the delegation that met the Deputy Commissioner.

**[Improved monsoon forecast model to be ready by 2015](#)**



Delegates look at the X100 Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) at the India Geospatial Forum, in Hyderabad .—Photo: Mohammed Yousuf

The first comprehensive dynamic forecast model of the Indian monsoon with improved accuracy under a Rs.280-crore project involving Indian and foreign researchers would be ready by 2015, according to Shailesh Nayak, Secretary, Department of Earth Sciences.

Titled 'National Mission of Monsoon', the project seeks to improve the accuracy of the forecast for both short, medium and seasonal timescales, Dr. Nayak told *The Hindu* after inaugurating a three-day meet -- India Geospatial Forum with the theme 'Towards geo enabled economy'.

He said that international scientists from various countries had been invited to participate in the mission and some of the universities from the United States, UK and Australia had joined hands with Indian institutions. Already, a dynamic forecast had been given for 2012, which had picked up the rainfall distribution pattern quite well but was not to the expectation on overall rainfall.

Many Indian institutions, including IMD, IITM, C-DAC and Jadhavpur University were collaborating in the project.



Earlier, while addressing the delegates at the conference, he referred to how climate change was affecting rainfall pattern and suggested the need for a closer look at linking peninsular rivers in the country.

Labour Minister D. Nagender, who inaugurated the conference, said that the State government was utilising GIS for various purposes, including coastal mapping and land records.

The need of the day was the application of GIS for the “aam aadmi” and he urged scientists to make sure it reached the common man in areas such as public transport and women’s security.

K.K. Singh, CMD Rolta and president of the Association of Geospatial Industries said that increasing number of developing countries were using geospatial technology in order to advance the quality of life of its citizens. He said that a GIS Advisory Board had been constituted to evolve a national geospatial policy.

Swarna Subba Rao, Surveyor General, Survey of India, V.K. Dadhwal, Director, National Remote Sensing Centre and Burmanje Dorine, chair-Executive Board, Cadastre, Land Registry and Mapping Agency, Netherlands too spoke.

### **Estimate of cotton production**

Coimbatore-based Indian Cotton Federation will release its estimate of cotton production regularly based on the statistics collected from the production centres in the country.

According to a release from the association, it has estimated the cotton production in the country during the current season (October 2012 to September 2013) to be 325 lakh bales. Production in Gujarat, which is the largest cotton producing State in the country, is expected to be 85 lakh bales. And production in Andhra Pradesh is expected to be 68 lakh bales.

The Cotton Advisory Board had estimated cotton production to be 334 lakh bales this year. The newly-constituted consultative committee of the board will meet on Wednesday (January 23) to review the cotton estimates.

## Call for linking weather forecast with market

Director-General of India Meteorology Department L.S. Rathore has called for linkage of weather information systems with commodity markets to ensure better prices for farmers in view of their bitter experience last year in the trading of guar bean.

Ninety per cent of farmers sold guar bean at less than Rs. 6,000 a quintal, while traders who constituted the rest 1 per cent disposed of the produce at Rs. 35,000 a quintal in the speculative market. This was an example of better information systems available with stockbrokers than those with meteorologists on commodity exchange, Mr. Rathore said in his address at the national symposium on 'Climate Change and Agriculture: Slicing Down Uncertainties' here on Tuesday.

He added that the IMD was working on linking agro-meteorological information with market information.

The department is trying to double up the best agro-meteorology practices by monitoring the atmosphere using modern systems.

The objective is to increase productivity per unit of resource or input. Peter Q. Craufurd, research programme director at ICRISAT, said climate information systems were critical to policy formulation in agriculture.

P.K. Agrawal of International Water Management Institute and A.K. Singh, V-C of Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia Krishi Viswavidyalay, Gwalior, also spoke.

## **Koyambedu to house TN's first foodgrains market**

Armed with clearance from the state environment impact assessment authority, the government has dusted off its long-pending proposal to have an exclusive [foodgrains market](#) at Koyambedu. Preparatory works have begun for setting up the market, the first such facility in the state, and it will be opened by mid-2014, sources said.

The 69.07-crore market, sources said, will come up on a 14.41-acre land next to the existing wholesale vegetable market, considered Asia's largest perishable goods market. After years of persistent efforts by the [Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority](#), the work has finally begun on the market. Tenders have been finalised and work orders issued. The blueprint suggests provision of godowns, parking space for trucks, public toilets, cement concrete roads, solar street lights, fire-fighting system and water supply.

"We wholeheartedly welcome the market," Kothawalchavadi Foodgrains Merchants Association president S Chandresan said. The market will help decongest the George Town area, which currently houses hundreds of wholesale merchants dealing in foodgrains.

Though the upcoming market promises to provide easy access to arterial roads, traders are not satisfied with the proposed parking facilities for trucks. "All 200 parking sheds in Kothawalchavadi should be reallocated to Koyambedu," S Palanichamy, a wholesale merchant, said.

Tamil Nadu [Vanigar Sangagangalin Peramaippu](#), the largest trader body in the state, felt that the infrastructure facilities in the upcoming market should match world-class standards. "It should not suffer the fate of the vegetable market, which is plagued by poor facilities," its president A Vikramaraja said. With Chennai Metro Rail Limited already taking over 75 acres of the CMDA land for its Koyambedu metro rail yard and station, official sources said the possibility of expanding the vegetable market and foodgrains market was nil.

## **Govt may hike annual agricultural lending target for Banks**

The government may increase the annual target of the banks for lending to the agriculture sector by 22% in the upcoming [union budget](#) to 7 lakh crore, in view of the revised classification of priority sector loans issued by the Reserve Bank of India.

"Banks will be pushed to achieve their direct lending targets and focus on the new improved Kisan Credit Card scheme," said a [finance ministry](#) official, who did not wish to be named.

The banks will be able to meet the new targets easily, the official said, since the revised classification includes companies of individual farmers and partnership firms directly engaged in agriculture and allied activities. By November-end, the banks had extended about 5.49 lakh crore to the sector against the target of 5.75 lakh crore for 2012-13. As per the RBI's norms, banks have to lend 13.5% of their adjusted net bank credit towards direct lending to the agriculture sector. The total mandated lending to the sector is 18%, including loans for investment in agriculture and allied activities.

A few banks, such as the [Central Bank of India](#) [BSE -0.29 %](#) (-78.60%), [IDBI Bank](#) [BSE -0.23 %](#) (-41.71%) and [Canara Bank](#) [BSE 0.48 %](#) (-3.75%), had registered a decline in direct lending to the sector in the first half of the current fiscal. The government will also push the regional rural banks to open more farm loan accounts and meet the credit needs of farmers, the official said, adding, "The number of farmer accounts has not been growing as fast as the credit flow. Both commercial banks and RRBs will need to focus on the same."

The banking system covers about 50% farmers in the country.

The government will also continue with the interest subvention scheme, which provides 3% interest subvention to farmers who repay on time. The subvention is provided on short-term crop loans, for which the banks charge 7% interest rates.

"It is an effective mechanism to encourage farmers and will also bring down the bad loans in the sector," the official said. In addition, the farmers who park their produce at warehouses will also get 3% interest subvention, bringing the real [interest rate](#) to 4%.

Bankers said the RBI's guidelines would make it possible to meet the revised targets.

Private varsity opens oil extraction plant

The Centurion University in Gajapati district on Tuesday got into a novel venture of opening an oil extraction plant that can benefit tribal farmers of the region.

The Rs 5.65-crore plant can extract oil from produces like ginger, kewda flower, jasmine, turmeric and pachaouli (a wild plant). "No university in India has such a project. There are only seven such machines in the country and none in the eastern region. The machine has been developed by a Pune-based firm with the help of the Centurion University's chemical engineering department," said Dr. Mukti Mishra, president of the university.

"The university project will provide backward and forward linkages to farmers of Koraput, Kandhamal, Gajapati and Ganjam region where the raw materials are grown abundantly. The university has plans to expand the project for preparing pulps of tamarind, pineapple and mango in the near future," he said.

Chief minister [Naveen Patnaik](#) during his visit to Gajapati district on Tuesday inaugurated the plant.

Among others agriculture minister Debi Prasad Mishra and Berhampur MP Sidhant Mohapatra were present .

The chief minister inaugurated a 100-bed tribal boys hostel at [Tagore Memorial High School](#), a polytechnic and a new fire station at Betaguda near Paralakhemundi.

He also laid foundation stone for new buildings of the collectorate and [Regional Transport Office](#)(RTO).

**Indian express**

**Drought: Collectors to get higher fund-allocation power**

Increasing powers of district collectors to allow them to allot up to Rs 5 crore for drought mitigation will come up in the state cabinet on Wednesday.

Earlier this month, the cabinet had empowered collectors to sanction up to Rs 2 crore.

The cabinet sub-committee on drought met on Tuesday afternoon to discuss mitigation measures. The government chalked out emergency plans for summer, including supply through railway wagons or shifting of villagers to alternate locations.

In the state, 14 districts are facing a severe drought, reported to be the worst in 50 years and dams have low water levels.

The water supply department has been allocated Rs 414 crore to supply water in worst-hit areas and Rs 214 crore is being spent on cattle camps for fodder.

Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation Patangrao Kadam informed the press about the measures.

### **Sugar price sinks to 2010 low; cocoa, coffee hit by profit taking**

Sugar prices in New York settled close to two-and-a-half-year lows on Tuesday as speculative investors and traders continued to sell sweetener amid concerns about a growing surplus following forecasts of a record crop from Brazil, the world's biggest producer, in 2013/14.

Coffee and cocoa prices put in their weakest one-day performance in more than two months as investors locked in profits after their brief rally last week.

Raw sugar futures remained under pressure, with March settling down 0.25 cent or 1.36 percent at 18.12 cents per lb, its lowest level for the front month since Aug. 10, 2010.

Dealers and analysts said both the technical and fundamental outlooks for the market were bearish, with a break below 18.25 cents likely to trigger further losses. Prices could fall "all the way to around 18 cents," said VTB Capital analyst Andrey Kryuchenkov.

As top producer Brazil's cane crush nears completion, focus has shifted to the coming crop, which is expected to surpass a bumper 2012/13 crush. Recent heavier-than-usual rains helped the sugarcane crop while demand remains lackluster.

Unica, the country's sugar association, forecast an increase in output of 10 percent to a fresh record in 2013/14.



As a result, traders and speculative investors have added new shorts. On Friday, open interest, the number of outstanding contracts, rose above 810,000 lots, its highest level since February 2010, according to ICE data.

"The market appears to be getting used to a large fund net short and, most likely, the short is even larger by now," said Michael McDougall, a vice president at Newedge USA in New York.

# HindustanTimes






Chennai

## Chennai - INDIA

<b>Today's Weather</b>  Sunny <b>Wednesday, Jan 23</b> <b>Max</b> 30°   <b>Min</b> 22° Rain: 0 Humidity: 74 Wind: normal Sunrise: 06:35 Sunset: 06:05 Barometer: 1017	<b>Tomorrow's Forecast</b>  Partly Cloudy <b>Thursday, Jan 24</b> <b>Max</b> 32°   <b>Min</b> 22°
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### Extended Forecast for a week


<b>Friday</b> Jan 25	<b>Saturday</b> Jan 26	<b>Sunday</b> Jan 27	<b>Monday</b> Jan 28	<b>Tuesday</b> Jan 29
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32°   23°	25°   23°	25°   23°	25°   23°	25°   23°
Partly Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Cloudy

**Airport Weather**

**Delhi**

**Rain:** 0      **Sunrise:** 07:13  
**Humidity:** 100      **Sunset:** 05:52  
**Wind:** normal      **Barometer:** 1022



## THE HINDU Business Line

### Indian farmers want say in global talks on tobacco crop control

Indian tobacco growers have asked the Government to ensure a berth for them in the global talks that seek to put a clamp on tobacco crop. Irked at not being taken as members of the Indian delegation at the recent talks at Korea recently, the tobacco growers demanded that they need to be heard as they are the key stakeholders.

They asked for representation in the Working Group being currently constituted to draft recommendations on Articles 17 and 18 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) at the 6th Conference of Parties (CoP 6) to be held next year.

These articles are aimed at reducing the tobacco crop size across the globe, keeping in view the resistance to this crop.



In a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and Union Ministers of Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Family Welfare and External Affairs, they explained how vital their presence in the new working group.

They are alleging that the farmers are not being shown viable alternatives to shift from tobacco cultivation.

“The delegation from India who had been sent to the global talks to decide upon the fate of the eight crore tobacco farmers in India had little knowledge or background of crops and agricultural conditions in India,” the farmers alleged.

They alleged that five large tobacco growing countries such as the US, Argentina and Zimbabwe have not signed the FCTC. The farmers in these five countries will stand to gain if tobacco crop is curbed in India because they do not need to comply with FCTC led crop reduction.

### **Farmers high on radar of poll-bound Karnataka, M.P.**

With an eye on the upcoming Assembly elections, the BJP Governments in Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka have gone the whole hog in wooing the numerically strong farming community.

The Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) has proposed to raise the procurement price of milk by up to Rs 3/litre.

### **PROBLEM OF PLENTY**

This is over and above the existing Rs 2/litre subsidy that the State Government pays to farmers, which was announced by former BJP Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa.

The timing of the hike is important given that the Federation is said to have incurred a loss of Rs 59 crore last year and is currently saddled with 18,000 tonnes of skimmed milk powder and 6,000 tonnes of white butter.

The latest sweetener to farmers could make things worse considering the fact that procurement touched a record high of 52 lakh litres a day recently.

KMF has been struggling to handle the surplus volumes of milk flowing to its member unions.

“We will be raising the retail milk prices by Rs 4/litre of which three-fourth will be passed on to the farmers,” said Somashekar Reddy, Chairman, KMF.

The term of the Karnataka Assembly will end in May, while that of Madhya Pradesh in October.

#### BONUS TIME IN M.P.

In Madhya Pradesh, high agriculture growth is likely to be one of the poll planks for the Shivraj Singh Chouhan led-BJP Government, which will face elections later this year.

MP, which started announcing a bonus over the Centre’s minimum support price for wheat since 2007-08, has made its intentions clear of continuing the trend in the current year.

“Within our limited resources, we have already announced our intention to offer a bonus of Rs 100 a quintal for wheat and rice over the Centre’s MSP,” said the State Agriculture Minister Ramakrishna Kusumariya.

MP’s strategy of handing out a bonus-over-MSP has helped expand the wheat acreage considerably from 37 lakh hectares (lh) in 2007-08 to 50 lh in the current rabi season.

Production has shot up from 6 million tonnes (mt) in 2007-08 to 10.5 mt in 2012-13.

#### SOARING OUTPUT

The State has emerged as a major procurer of wheat in the past five years, almost matching the traditional States of Punjab and Haryana.

Last year, MP procured 85 per cent of the wheat produced in the State against 0.8 per cent in 2006-07.

Wheat procurement stood at record high of 8.5 mt in 2011-12 against 4.90 mt in the previous year.

“We expect a minimum of 10 per cent increase in output this year,” Kusumariya said.

### **‘Insecticide use dropping with growth of Bt technology’**

There is a steady fall globally in the use of insecticides and pesticides – thanks to the growth in cultivation of biotech-driven crops, says Anthony M. Shelton, an agri-biotech expert from Cornell University, US.

Bt cotton and corn are the key drivers that are pushing down the sales of the \$10-billion global insecticide industry.

Environmental concerns apart, the availability of insect resistant Bt crops are playing an important role, he said.

There is also a good case to bring down the use of harmful insecticide and pesticide sprays through biotech techniques in fruits and vegetable crops, especially cabbage, cauliflower, eggplant (brinjal), onions and tomatoes, he said.

Interestingly, two major insecticide producing companies – Bayer Crop Sciences and DuPont E.I. – have strongly forayed into biotechnology, especially Bt and transgenics. In the next decade, the focus would be on developing newer varieties of plants that are resistant to key insects, Shelton, who heads Cornell’s Agricultural Experimental Station, told *Business Line* here.

Tracing the growth of agri-biotech, Shelton, an expert in integrated pest management said insect resistant Bt crops were grown in 66 million hectares spread across 26 countries in 2011.

“It is also no longer a rich country’s crop as nearly 50 per cent of these countries are from the developing block,” he said.

## REGULATORY CONCERNS

Referring to India, he said regulatory impediments are slowing down the growth of biotechnology, especially in agri-biotech. China is rapidly moving forward in adoption of Bt technology for agri-crops, while India is grappling with putting in place its Regulatory Authority for biotechnology.

Interestingly, when India announced a moratorium on Bt brinjal in 2011, China gave its nod for Bt rice in a big way, he said.

Shelton felt that fortified rice varieties, which will give additional benefits such as Vitamin A and Bt crops that give environmental benefits by way of reducing pesticide use to resistant to harmful insects and higher yielding varieties, have the potential to turn the tide in favour of this technology in the future.

## Weak trend prevails at coconut oil market



Coconut oil market is witnessing a slight selling trend on the revival of Tamil Nadu markets after Pongal Holidays.

Prakash B.Rao, Vice President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA) said that the market is ruling at Rs 68 per kg in Tamil Nadu (Rs 69) while it is remaining flat at Rs 71 in Kerala quoted last week.

Despite the news of imposing 2.5 per cent duty on imported edible oil by the Government, Rao said it has not made any impact on the coconut oil market both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

The coconut oil sale in North India has been dropped due to severe cold wave lashing in various parts of the country, keeping away buyers and corporates from the market, he added.

However, the copra prices have declined by Rs 100 to touch Rs 4,900 per quintal in Kerala (Rs 5000) terminal markets whereas in Tamil Nadu it remained at the same level of Rs 4,800 per quintal quoted last week. Millers are getting fair average quality of copra from local farmers at this price level in Tamil Nadu markets, he said.

Palm oil prices are ruling steady at Rs 52 per kg quoted last week and palm kernel oil prices at Rs 54, which is more or less steady in the last two weeks.

Thalath Mahamood, former President, COMA ruled out any sudden drop in coconut oil prices as copra prices are steady due to tight supply both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu markets. The market is witnessing a steady trend, he said adding, that low prices of other edible oils are a concern for the market.

Bharat N.Khona, former Board Member, COMA said that the market is ruling steady and the demand has declined at these higher prices. Corporates and upcountry buyers are abstaining from the market as other imported oils are cheaper.

[Oilseed exporters seek more time to register with Apeda](#)

The Indian Oilseeds and Produce Export Promotion Council (IOPEPC) has sought more time for groundnut shelling units to comply with the new Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) notification making it compulsory for export units to register with Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (Apeda).

There has been a lot of concern among the groundnut processors following the DGFT notification, according to IOPEPC.

Upon announcement of trade notification, office-bearers of the council made a representation at various levels in Commerce Ministry for simplifying the new guidelines. One immediate serious issue was stoppage of export of groundnut which was stuffed in containers lying in the ports. The council has been successful in resolving this issue to a large extent.

IOPEPC held a meeting recently to inform the trade about the new requirement and also hear the difficulties that would be faced by the trade. Consequently on January 15, the council held a meeting with Apeda officials to seek 12-24 months for export units to register and comply with Apeda regulations.

While informing the trade that they have been give more than two years to register and adhere with new norms, Apeda assured to look into the issues sympathetically, said a council member who was present at the meeting.

Currently there are about 45 groundnut shelling units that are complying with Apeda. However, there are scores of small and medium units that are yet to register with those norms. These units, which cater largely to domestic markets, also tap the export markets occasionally when there is a buoyant demand, he said.