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ACFI IN NEWS

कृषि रसायनों के सुरक्षित उपयोग के लिए डीलरों को किया जागरूक

भास्कर न्यूज | अमृतसर

एग्रो केम फेडरेशन ऑफ इंडिया (एसीएफआई) ने कृषि डीलरों और वितरकों के लिए एक जागरूकता व संवाद कार्यक्रम आयोजित किया। इसका उद्देश्य कृषि रसायन उद्योग और डीलर नेटवर्क के बीच समन्वय मजबूत कर सुरक्षित व टिकाऊ खेती को बढ़ावा देना रहा।

कार्यक्रम में कृषि रसायनों के सही उपयोग, नकली उत्पादों की रोकथाम और नियामकीय मानकों पर चर्चा हुई। भारत सर्टिस एग्रीसाइंस के डॉ. रणजेश सिंह और एग्री इनपुट डीलर्स एसोसिएशन के अध्यक्ष दीपक शर्मा ने डीलरों को किसानों का पहला सलाहकार बताते हुए उन्हें सही जानकारी देने पर जोर दिया।

मुख्य कृषि अधिकारी डॉ. अमरजीत सिंह दोसांझ ने कहा कि जिम्मेदार सलाह और नकली उत्पादों पर रोक से बेहतर उत्पादन के साथ स्वास्थ्य व पर्यावरण की सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित होगी।

Experts call for judicious use of agrochemicals

PAWAN K JAISWAR
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

AMRITSAR, AUGUST 7

As India's population touches around 1.4 billion and the demand for food continues to rise, the challenge before agriculture is not to abandon crop protection products, but to ensure their judicious, scientific and need-based use, experts believe.

The issue came up during an awareness and interaction programme for agri-input dealers and distributors in Amritsar on Friday, where experts discussed the need to strike a balance between higher farm productivity, food security and environmental protection.

Organised by the Agro Chem Federation of India (ACFI), an apex body representing about 85 per cent of the Indian agrochemical industry, the programme was held on the theme "Sustainable Agriculture – Dealer and Industry Partnership".

The experts pointed out that while organic and natural farming practices had an important role in sustainable agriculture, relying entirely on such systems to meet the food requirements of a country of India's size and population would pose significant challenges. They stressed that a pragmatic approach combining scientific farming, integrated pest management, responsible use of crop protection products and sustainable practices was needed to maintain productivity.

The focus, they said, should therefore be on using agrochemicals only when required, in the correct quantity and through the recommended method rather than their indiscriminate or excessive application.

KPS Sidhu, senior DGM, Dhanuka Agritech Ltd, said such an approach could help improve productivity while protecting farmers, consumers and the environment. It could also contribute to reducing pesticide residues and the development of resistance in pests, while ensuring the continued effectiveness of crop protection products.

Dr Ranjesh Singh, general manager (head), regulatory affairs and product development, Bharat Certis Agri-Science Ltd, said greater coordination between the industry and dealer network was needed to counter misinformation, strengthen scientific awareness and promote responsible use of agrochemicals.

"Sustainable agriculture need not be viewed as a choice between chemical and organic farming. Instead, promote a science-based and balanced approach aimed at producing enough food for a growing population while minimising risks to human health and the environment," he stated.

Dr Amarjit Singh Dosanjh, chief agriculture officer, Amritsar, said capacity building of dealers and distributors was essential as they were an important source of technical guidance for farmers.

एसीएफआई ने कृषि डीलरों और वितरकों के लिए टिकाऊ कृषि जागरूकता कार्यक्रम आयोजित

कार्यक्रम में उपस्थित डीलर और वितरको के साथ अधिकारी (आशीष)

सवेरा न्यूज़/गर्ग

अमृतसर, 8 अगस्त : भारत के 85 प्रतिशत एग्रोकेमिकल उद्योग का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले शीर्ष संगठन एग्रो केम फैडरेशन ऑफ इंडिया (ACFI) ने कृषि विक्रेताओं (डीलरों) एवं वितरकों के लिए एक जागरूकता एवं संवाद कार्यक्रम का आयोजन किया। कार्यक्रम का उद्देश्य कृषि रसायन उद्योग और डीलर नेटवर्क के बीच सहयोग को मजबूत बनाना तथा सुरक्षित, वैज्ञानिक और टिकाऊ खेती को बढ़ावा देना था।

सुरक्षित, जिम्मेदार एवं टिकाऊ कृषि के लिए डीलर-उद्योग साझेदारी को मजबूत बनाना" विषय पर आयोजित इस कार्यक्रम में कृषि रसायनों के जिम्मेदार उपयोग, किसानों में जागरूकता बढ़ाने की आवश्यकता, उद्योग एवं वितरकों की संयुक्त स्टूवर्डशिप पहल तथा बदलते नियामकीय मानकों के अनुरूप सुरक्षित कृषि पद्धतियों जैसे महत्वपूर्ण विषयों पर चर्चा की गई। इस अवसर पर डॉ. अमरजीत सिंह दोसांझ, मुख्य कृषि अधिकारी, कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण विभाग ने कहा क़पंजाब सरकार टिकाऊ कृषि को बढ़ावा देने के लिए फसल सुरक्षा उत्पादों के सुरक्षित और विवेकपूर्ण उपयोग के संबंध में जागरूकता फैलाने के एसीएफआई के प्रयासों का स्वागत करती है।

पंजाब सरकार नियामकीय संस्थाओं, उद्योग और डीलर नेटवर्क के बीच बेहतर समन्वय स्थापित कर नियामकीय अनुपालन को मजबूत करने के लिए अपना पूरा सहयोग देती रहेगी।

ਟਿਕਾਊ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ

ਪੱਤਰ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਕ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਜਾਗਰਣ• ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ : ਐਗਰੋ ਕੈਮ ਫੈਡਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਆਫ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਨੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਵਿਚ ਟਿਕਾਊ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ। ਇਸ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਡੀਲਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਵਿਤਰਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ ਤੇ ਆਪਸੀ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਐਗਰੋ-ਕੈਮੀਕਲ ਉਦਯੋਗ ਅਤੇ ਡੀਲਰ ਨੈੱਟਵਰਕ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ, ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਅਤੇ ਟਿਕਾਊ ਖੇਤੀ ਤਰੀਕਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ। ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਤੇ ਟਿਕਾਊ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਲਈ ਡੀਲਰ-ਉਦਯੋਗ ਭਾਈਵਾਲੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਕਈ ਅਹਿਮ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਚਰਚਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਖੇਤੀ-ਰਸਾਇਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਵਰਤੋਂ, ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ, ਉਦਯੋਗ ਤੇ ਵਿਤਰਕਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਉਪਰਾਲੇ ਤੇ ਬਦਲਦੇ ਨਿਯਮਕ ਮਾਪਦੰਡਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਕੂਲ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਦੇ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਤੇ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਭਲਾਈ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਅਫ਼ਸਰ ਡਾ. ਅਮਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੋਸਾਂਝ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਟਿਕਾਊ ਖੇਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਫਸਲ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਉਤਪਾਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਚੱਜੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਏਸੀਐਫਆਈ ਦੇ ਯਤਨ ਚੰਗਾ ਉਪਰਾਲਾ ਹੈ। ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਡੀਲਰ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਤਰਕ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਤਕਨੀਕੀ ਸਲਾਹ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਸਰੋਤ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸਮਰੱਥ-ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਹੈ। ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਸਲਾਹ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਨ, ਨਕਲੀ ਉਤਪਾਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਰੋਕਥਾਮ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਨਿਯਮਤ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ-ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਪਹਿਲਕਦਮੀਆਂ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਉਤਪਾਦਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਸਿਹਤ ਤੇ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਨ ਦੀ ਰਖੀ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਅਹਿਮ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਟੇਸ ਐਗਰੀਸਾਇੰਸ ਲਿਮਟਿਡ ਦੇ ਰੈਗੂਲੇਟਰੀ ਮਾਮਲਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਉਤਪਾਦ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੇ ਜਨਰਲ ਮੈਨੇਜਰ ਮੁਖੀ ਡਾ. ਰਣਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਡੀਲਰ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਤਰਕ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਜ਼ਰੀਆ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਖੇਤੀ-ਰਸਾਇਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਤੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰਾਨਾ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿਮ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਨੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰਾਨਾ ਸਲਾਹ-ਮਸ਼ਵਰੇ ਦੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਨ, ਕੀਟਨਾਸ਼ਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਭਰਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨ, ਉਦਯੋਗ ਅਤੇ ਵੰਡ ਨੈੱਟਵਰਕਾਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਤਾਲਮੇਲ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਹੇਠਲੇ ਪੱਧਰ 'ਤੇ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ 'ਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਟਿਕਾਊ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਕਰਦੇ ਬੁਲਾਰੇ •ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਜਾਗਰਣ

एसीएफआई ने अमृतसर में कृषि डीलरों और वितरकों के लिए टिकाऊ कृषि जागरूकता कार्यक्रम आयोजित किया

अमृतसर, 7 अगस्त- भारत के 85 प्रतिशत एग्रोकेमिकल उद्योग का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले शीर्ष संगठन एग्रो केम फेडरेशन ऑफ इंडिया (ष्टस्नढ्ढ) ने आज अमृतसर में कृषि विक्रेताओं (डीलरों) एवं वितरकों के लिए एक जागरूकता एवं संवाद कार्यक्रम का आयोजन किया। कार्यक्रम का उद्देश्य कृषि रसायन उद्योग और डीलर नेटवर्क के बीच सहयोग को मजबूत बनाना तथा सुरक्षित, वैज्ञानिक और टिकाऊ खेती को बढ़ावा देना था। सुरक्षित, जिम्मेदार एवं टिकाऊ कृषि के लिए डीलर-उद्योग साझेदारी को मजबूत बनाना विषय पर आयोजित इस कार्यक्रम में कृषि रसायनों के जिम्मेदार उपयोग, किसानों में जागरूकता बढ़ाने की आवश्यकता, उद्योग एवं वितरकों की संयुक्त स्टूवर्डशिप पहल तथा बदलते नियामकीय मानकों के अनुरूप सुरक्षित कृषि पद्धतियों जैसे महत्वपूर्ण विषयों पर चर्चा की गई।

कृषि विक्रेताओं के लिए जागरूकता कार्यक्रम करवाया

सेमिनार के दौरान संबोधित करते हुए डा. मोहम्मद इरफान। साथ है अन्य • डीपीआरओ

जागरण संवाददाता, अमृतसर: एग्रो केम फेडरेशन आफ इंडिया (एसीएफआइ) ने शुक्रवार को अमृतसर में कृषि विक्रेताओं और वितरकों के लिए जागरूकता कार्यक्रम का आयोजन किया। इसका उद्देश्य कृषि रसायन उद्योग और डीलर नेटवर्क के बीच सहयोग को मजबूत करना था। मुख्य कृषि अधिकारी डा. अमरजीत सिंह दोसांझ ने कहा कि पंजाब सरकार टिकाऊ कृषि को बढ़ावा देने के लिए एसीएफआइ के प्रयासों का स्वागत करती है। उन्होंने बताया कि कृषि डीलर और वितरक किसानों के लिए तकनीकी सलाह का पहला स्रोत होते हैं, इसलिए उनका क्षमता निर्माण आवश्यक है।

डा. दोसांझ ने कहा कि पंजाब सरकार नियामकीय संस्थाओं, उद्योग और डीलर नेटवर्क के बीच समन्वय स्थापित कर नियामकीय अनुपालन को मजबूत करने के लिए सहयोग देती रहेगी। भारत सर्टिस एग्रीसाइंस लिमिटेड के डाक्टर रणजेश सिंह ने बताया कि कृषि डीलर व वितरक किसानों के लिए पहले संपर्क का माध्यम होते हैं। कार्यक्रम में जिम्मेदार सलाह देने की संस्कृति विकसित करने और किसानों में जागरूकता बढ़ाने पर जोर दिया गया।

ACFI conducts sustainable agriculture awareness programme for agri dealer distributers in Amritsar

CHARANJIT SINGH ARORA
AMRITSAR, AUG 7

The apex agrochem industry body representing 85% of the Indian Agro Chemical Indusrty, The Agro Chem Federation of India (ACFI), today organised an awareness and interaction programme for agri dealers & distributers in Amritsar to strengthen collaboration between the agrochemical industry and its dealer network to promote sustainable, safe and scientific farming practices. The programme, "Strengthening Dealer Industry Partnership for Safe, Responsible & Sustainable Agriculture", touched on issues such as responsible product use, need for farmer awareness, industry & distributers joint stewardship initiatives, and safe agricultural practices amid evolving regulatory expectations.

The programme was organised in Amritsar on Friday by ACFI, a non-profit organisation representing 85% of the Indian agrochemical industry. Dr Amarjit Singh Dosanjh, Chief Agriculture Officer, Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Amritsar, Government of Punjab, said.

ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, 8 ਅਗਸਤ (ਸੁਰਿੰਦਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਰਪਾਲ)-ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਐਗਰੋ-ਕੈਮੀਕਲ (ਖੇਤੀ-ਰਸਾਇਣ) ਉਦਯੋਗ ਦੇ 85 ਫੀਸਦੀ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਦੀ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦਗੀ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾ 'ਐਗਰੋ ਕੈਮ ਫੈਡਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਆਫ ਇੰਡੀਆ' ਨੇ ਅੱਜ ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ। 'ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ, ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਟਿਕਾਊ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਲਈ ਡੀਲਰ-ਉਦਯੋਗ ਭਾਈਵਾਲੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਨਾ' ਵਿਸ਼ੇ 'ਤੇ ਕਰਵਾਏ ਗਏ ਇਸ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਕਈ ਅਹਿਮ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਚਰਚਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਖੇਤੀ-ਰਸਾਇਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਵਰਤੋਂ, ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ, ਉਦਯੋਗ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਤਰਕਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਉਪਰਾਲੇ, ਅਤੇ ਬਦਲਦੇ ਨਿਯਮਕ ਮਾਪਦੰਡਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਕੂਲ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਦੇ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਅਫ਼ਸਰ ਡਾ. ਅਮਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੋਸਾਂਝ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਟਿਕਾਊ ਖੇਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਫਸਲ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਉਤਪਾਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਚੱਜੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਗਰੂਕਤਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਏਸੀਐੱਫਆਈ ਦੇ ਯਤਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਵਾਗਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਟਿਸ ਐਗਰੀ ਸਾਇੰਸ ਲਿਮਟਿਡ ਦੇ ਰੈਗੂਲੇਟਰੀ ਮਾਮਲਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਤਪਾਦ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੇ ਜਨਰਲ ਮੈਨੇਜਰ (ਮੁਖੀ) ਡਾ. ਰਣਜੇਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਡੀਲਰ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਤਰਕ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਜ਼ਰੀਆ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਲਈ, ਉਹ ਖੇਤੀ-ਰਸਾਇਣਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਅਤੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰਾਨਾ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਹਿਮ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਦੀ ਐਗਰੀ-ਇਨਪੁਟ ਡੀਲਰਜ਼ ਐਸੋਸੀਏਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਦੀਪਕ ਸ਼ਰਮਾ ਨੇ ਖੇਤੀਬਾੜੀ ਸਮੱਗਰੀ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰਾਨਾ ਵਿਕਰੀ, ਨਕਲੀ ਉਤਪਾਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਰੋਕਥਾਮ, ਵਾਤਾਵਰਣ ਦੀ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਖੇਤੀ ਉਤਪਾਦਕਤਾ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਹੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਫ਼ੈਸਲੇ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਰਗੇ ਅਹਿਮ ਪਹਿਲੂਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਕੀਤੇ।

NEWS

Centre eases rules for receiving export payments in rupees

ASIT RANJAN MISHRA
New Delhi, 20 August

In a major push for wider use of rupee in international trade, India has removed a key regulatory hurdle by allowing exporters to receive payments in Indian currency while retaining incentives under the country's foreign trade policy.

It is an additional payment mechanism to the existing system based on freely convertible currencies.

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), in a notification issued on Wednesday, amended the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023 with immediate effect, aligning rules on export invoicing and realisation with the Reserve Bank of India's existing foreign exchange regulations.

The move comes against the backdrop of US President Donald Trump warning Brics countries against moves to challenge the dollar, including the creation of an alternative currency. He had also previously threatened punitive tariffs against countries backing such efforts.

India, however, has explicitly rejected the idea of a common Brics currency. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said earlier this month that India does not support such a scheme. India has maintained that rupee internationalisation is about expanding the use of its domestic currency in global trade rather than replacing existing foreign currency arrangements.

The dollar-based international financial system has also made countries like Russia vulnerable to sanctions by the West.

ILLUSTRATION: BINAY SINHA

Focus on ₹ internationalisation

- DGFT notification amends Foreign Trade Policy 2023 effective immediately
- It aligns export invoicing and realisation rules with RBI's existing forex regulations
- Exporters can now set contracts and invoices either in ₹ or a foreign currency
- Exports settled in ₹ will be eligible for FTP benefits
- This change follows RBI's 2022 order introducing Vostro accounts for invoicing and settlement of trade in ₹

RBI DG: PSBs underparticipating in fx derivatives P4

Under the new foreign trade policy norms, for countries outside the regional payment arrangement of Asian Clearing Union (ACU), exporters can now set contracts and invoices in either Indian rupees or foreign currency, with export payments also allowed in either currency.

More importantly, exports to any country other than Nepal and Bhutan for which proceeds are realised in rupees through approved banking channels will qualify for FTP benefits and count towards fulfilment of export obligations on par with exports realised in foreign currency. For Iran, the notification retains existing safeguards for rupee trade, referring to the FTP compliance requirement which governs specified sensitive goods and technologies linked to India's international non-proliferation commitments.

The change effectively completes a regulatory process that began in July 2022, when the RBI introduced a mechanism allowing international trade to be invoiced and settled in rupees through Special Rupee Vostro Accounts (SRVAs). Turn to Page 6

Study finds pesticide residues in farmers' blood samples

KMCRI study raises alarm on health hazards of pesticides

HUBBALLI, DHNS

Confirming the dangers of exposure to pesticides used in fields on the health of farmers, doctors at the Karnataka Medical College and Research Institute (KMCRI) in Hubballi have found hazardous chemical residues of pesticides in the blood samples of asymptomatic farmers.

Multidisciplinary Research Unit (MRU) of the KMCRI conducted a study on 13 farmers of Dharwad district recently and found pesticide residues in blood samples of eight farmers even after 15 days of spraying pesticides, which can cause health problems related to the heart, kidney and nervous system.

KMCRI MRU nodal officer Ram S Kaulgud stated that the hazardous chemical components in pesticides enter farmers' bodies through the breath or skin if proper precautions are not taken while spraying pesticides, and this may cause problems related to the heart, kidney and nerves.

A total of 13 asymptomatic farmers occupationally exposed to organophospate (OP) pesticides were evaluated for the presence of four commonly used OP compounds - chlorpyrifos, malathion, monocrotophos and profenofos, using chromatographic analysis. The study detected monocrotophos in four farmers, chlorphyrifos in three farmers, and malathion in one farmer. All the participants were negative for profenofos.

Pesticide being sprayed in a field near Hubballi.
DH PHOTO/GOVINDRAJ JAVALI

Doctors said the findings revealed measurable pesticide residues in several farmers despite the absence of clinical signs of acute organophospate poisoning, indicating evidence of subclinical occupational exposure.

The detection of monocrotophos in nearly one-third of the farmers studied indicates repeated occupational exposure to this highly hazardous organophosphate insecticide and suggests the possibility of cumulative neurotoxicity even in asymptomatic individuals. Although the prevalence of malathion was low, the high analytical response suggests recent or substantial exposure highlighting variability in pesticide handling practices and occupational exposure among farmers, the study said.

The study also observed that the detection of chlorphyrifos in approximately one-fourth of the study participants indicates persistent occupational exposure and supports previous evidence linking chronic chlorphyrifos exposure with inhibition of acetylcholinesterase activity and early neurological dysfunction.

KMCRI's MCU observed that pesticide detection in eight of 13 farmers indicates that several individuals were exposed to more than one pesticide or that multiple pesticide residues were present within the study population.

Dr Ram Kaulgud, Dr Arun Shettar, Dr Shivakumar Belur, and lab technician Veeresh were involved in the study.

"Though the research is of small scale, its importance is huge. The report regarding the possible adverse effects of pesticides on farmers' health has been submitted to the Health Department, and the officials have said a meeting in this regard would be convened with the Agriculture Department," Dr Ram said.

Gloves and face masks should be used while spraying pesticides. Precautions should be taken so that the pesticide does not fall on the body. Moreover, food should not be consumed while spraying it, he added.

Crystal Crop launches tech-led solution for 'Downy Mildew' in grapes

Our Bureau
Mangaluru

Crystal Crop Protection Ltd has announced the launch of 'Dominaris', a technology-led solution developed specifically for the management of downy mildew in grapes.

Downy mildew can pose a significant threat to grape cultivation, affecting foliage, shoots, inflorescence and developing bunches, with the potential to compromise crop health and harvest quality.

DUAL MODE ACTION

A media statement said that Dominaris brings together a dual mode of action with strong acropetal movement, excellent rain fastness and longer-duration protection, offering growers a comprehensive approach to downy mildew management.

Its activity extends across key stages of disease development, acting on spores as well as germinated hyphae, thereby helping restrict disease establishment and further spread.

It said the technology is designed to provide protection to both existing and newly emerging foliage during critical crop growth stages. By helping maintain a healthy green canopy and supporting new growth, Dominaris is positioned to help growers protect the crop through important developmental stages and support uniform bunch development.

India, Uzbekistan aim to double bilateral trade in 3 years

Our Bureau
New Delhi

India and Uzbekistan have set ambitious targets to sharply expand bilateral trade and investment, with New Delhi proposing to double two-way trade over the next three years, from about $1.3 billion at present, while Tashkent said it hoped to raise the figure to $2 billion by next year.

At a business forum meeting on Monday, the two countries identified mining, pharmaceuticals and healthcare, information technology, food processing and the digital economy as priority sectors for deeper collaboration.

Uzbekistan also pitched opportunities in metallurgy, chemicals, energy, automobiles and digital infrastructure.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said the recently signed bilateral investment treaty would boost investor confidence. "The recent bilateral investment treaty between India and Uzbekistan generates greater investor confidence. Areas to build strong collaboration between the two countries include mining,

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal (right) with Uzbekistan Minister Laziz Kudratov PTI

textiles, pharmaceuticals and healthcare, agriculture and food processing along with IT and digital economy," he said.

The event was organised by industry chamber Ficci in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Uzbekistan's Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade.

Uzbekistan's Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade Laziz Kudratov said bilateral trade had grown by about 30 per cent last year to reach $1.3 billion for the first time.

He expressed hope that it would touch $2 billion next year, before rising to $3-5 billion in the coming years.

APEDA strengthens India's presence in global organic mkt

NEW DELHI: In a bid to provide a platform for trade, knowledge exchange and business networking, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has facilitated participation of more than 35 international buyers from 13 key overseas markets in the country.

Buyers from Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Mongolia and Egypt, among others, represented leading importers, distributors, wholesalers and retail chains — participating in structured Buyer-Seller Meets (BSMs) with Indian exhibitors to foster business partnerships, explore new sourcing opportunities and promote long-term export collaborations, according to Commerce Ministry. The ministry, in collaboration with Nuernberg Messe India, is organising 'BIOFACH INDIA 2026' from August 6-8 at the India Expo Centre and Mart (IEML) in

Helm, Parijat Industries forge collaboration in agrochem space

Our Bureau
Mangaluru

Germany-based chemical major Helm AG and Parijat Industries (India) Ltd, an agrochemical company with a multinational presence, have announced a collaboration spanning digital commerce, branded crop protection products, technical manufacturing and international distribution.

The collaboration will combine HELM's agri-input portfolio and technology platforms, including its portfolio company Peat GmbH, developer of the Plantix digital agriculture platform, with Parijat's manufacturing base, global distribution network and formulation capabilities, a media statement said.

As part of the collaboration, Parijat will acquire a retailer-focused digital commerce platform and associated retailer database to improve procurement efficiency, market access and product distribution across key regions.

It will also work with the Plantix team to leverage its farmer network and demand-generation capabilities, including the exclusive integration of certain features for direct-to-farmer marketing.

The partnership will establish a new brand line in India, with Parijat and its subsidiary Leeds Lifesciences securing exclusive rights to use the Helm brand. Parijat plans to launch Helm's 'Plant Advantage' range of biostimulants and biologicals in India.

MANUFACTURING

Internationally, the collaboration will leverage Parijat's manufacturing and patented formulation-development capabilities to meet Helm's global requirements.

Parijat also plans to develop technical manufacturing capabilities for the proprietary molecules developed by Helm, with the companies intending to establish it as a toll-manufacturing partner for Helm's global active-ingredient and formulation requirements.

Uday Raj Anand, CEO, Domestic Business, Parijat Industries, said the partnership with Helm and Plantix was an important step towards Parijat's vision of using digital technologies for farmer advisory and distribution in the agrochemical industry.

Helm AG CEO Stephan Schnabel said India was "a highly important market for the future of agriculture".

Kharif revival lifts fertilizer demand; urea continues to lead

MONTHLY SALES. Fertilizer sales hit 41 lt by July 17, against estimated demand of 74.2 lt

Prabhudatta Mishra
New Delhi

HIGHLY SOUGHT-AFTER. Urea accounted for 25.86 lt, more than 62 per cent of its estimated monthly demand of 41.67 lt and nearly two-thirds of total fertilizer off-take.

Fertilizer demand recovered in the first half of July as kharif sowing gathered pace after a weather-induced slowdown in May and June. The latest sales data show that farmers continue to overwhelmingly prefer subsidised urea, underscoring the persistent imbalance in nutrient consumption despite the government's push for balanced input.

Against an estimated demand of 74.28 lakh tonnes (lt) for July, the peak sowing month for most kharif crops, sales touched 41.09 lt by July 17, indicating that over half the month's projected demand had already been met. Urea accounted for 25.86 lt, more than 62 per cent of its estimated monthly demand of 41.67 lt and nearly two-thirds of total fertilizer off-take. In comparison, sales of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) stood at 5.74 lt against a projected demand of 12 lt, Muriate of Potash (MoP) at 1.07 lt against 3.54 lt, and complex fertilisers at 8.42 lt against 17.07 lt.

The sharp recovery in demand coincided with a revival in kharif sowing following improved monsoon rains in July. The sowing deficit in paddy narrowed to 2 per cent as of July 31 from 9 per cent on July 10, while the shortfall in cotton reduced to 2 per cent from 15 per cent and in maize to 7 per cent from 20 per cent.

Overall kharif sowing was less than 3 per cent below last year's level by July-end, compared with a 4.7 per cent deficit a week earlier. "There has been a significant rise in sowing of paddy, maize and cotton in July. Consequently, demand for fertilizers has increased. As the latest forecast also indicates normal to above-normal rainfall in many areas that were severely deficient in June, fertilizer demand is expected to rise further in August depending on the pace of sowing," said SK Singh, an agriculture scientist.

Reflecting expectations of sustained field activity, the Agriculture Ministry has projected August demand at 38.01 lt of urea, 9.81 lt of DAP, 3.27 lt of MoP and 15.27 lt of complex fertilizers.

Q1 SALES LAG

Fertilizer sales in the first quarter (April-June) remained lower than a year ago. Total sales of the four major fertilizers declined 5 per cent to 115 lt from 121.19 lt in the corresponding period last year. Urea sales fell to 65.06 lt from 69.99 lt, while MoP and complex fertilizers also recorded lower off-take. DAP was broadly unchanged at 16.25 lt. According to sources, the decline followed an unusually strong April, when fertilizer sales surged 25 per cent to 23.59 lt.

The government subsequently introduced measures, including linking fertilizer distribution with Agristack data in select States, to curb excess purchases. Demand was further dampened by a weak monsoon in June, when rainfall ended 35 per cent below normal and kharif sowing lagged by nearly 20 per cent.

PAU-made maize dryer to boost farmers' income

Tribune News Service

PAU and Punjab Mandi Board officials inspect the indigenously developed maize dryer in Ludhiana.

LUDHIANA, AUGUST 2
Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) successfully demonstrated its indigenously developed maize dryer to officials of the Punjab Mandi Board, Department of Agriculture, and other stakeholders at the university.

The demonstration was conducted in the presence of Dr Satbir Singh Gosal, Vice-Chancellor, PAU, along with Dr Manjeet Singh, Dean, College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology (COAET); Dr Mahesh Kumar, Additional Director (Research); Dr TC Mittal, Head, Department of Processing and Food Engineering (DPFE); faculty members; and representatives from the Punjab Mandi Board, Department of Agriculture, Punjab Development Commission and the industry.

During the demonstration, the maize dryer successfully operated using heated air for drying maize. Following detailed deliberations, it was decided that the Punjab Mandi Board would provide wet maize procured from mandis across Punjab to facilitate a comprehensive performance evaluation of the dryer. The participants agreed that moisture reduction and the quality of the dried maize would be the key parameters for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the machine.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Gosal appreciated the efforts of the Department of Processing and Food Engineering in developing technologies aimed at minimising post-harvest losses and strengthening the state's agricultural infrastructure. He emphasised that efficient maize drying technologies would play a significant role in improving grain quality, reducing storage losses and enhancing the income of maize growers.

UTTAR PRADESH

Income of agri markets increased 15% in FY26

VIRENDRA SINGH RAWAT
Lucknow, 4 August

The income of government-notified agricultural markets (*mandis*) operating in Uttar Pradesh rose nearly 15 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) to more than ₹2,300 crore in FY2025-26 (FY26). The state's agri markets reported a collection of over ₹2,305 crore in FY26 compared with ₹1,991 crore in FY25.

The state has around 250 regulated and notified mandis managed through local market committees under the oversight of Uttar Pradesh State Agricultural Produce Market Council or UP Mandi Parishad across 75 districts. The bulk of the agri marketing in the state is transacted through these notified *mandis*.

UP ranks among the country's top agricultural and horticultural producers with its annual food grain production standing in excess of 70 million tonnes (mt).

Chairing the Council's 172nd Board meeting recently, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath underlined the importance of modernising these mandis to establish a transparent and modern farm marketing system. It has now decided to provide interest-free working capital to various cooperative institutions to strengthen the procurement of pulses and oilseeds under the price support scheme (PSS). The Board also approved a Budget of around ₹3,025 crore for FY2026-27, while receipts are estimated to top ₹2,228 crore.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister also directed officials to establish agricultural processing units under the public private partnership (PPP) mode across the mandis with investment-friendly norms. The state is also encouraging *mandis* to integrate with the e-NAM (National Agriculture Market) platform, and farmers to be linked with the National Natural Farming Mission.

The Board has approved to extend the duration of the Mukhyamantri Krishak Durghatna Sahayata Yojana and the Mukhyamantri Khet-Khalihan Agnikand Durghatna Sahayata Yojana till June 2030. A provision of ₹30 crore has been made in the Budget for the implementation of these two schemes.

so that the farm community continues to receive financial assistance in the event of accidents or incidents such as farm fires.

In a bid to emerge as a global agricultural export hub by 2047, Uttar Pradesh has set a target of kharif food grain and oilseed production of 30.25 mt during 2026-27, marking a 20 per cent hike over the corresponding kharif food grain and oilseed production of 25.62 mt last year.

Bayer launches 'Xivana Smart' for horti crops

Our Bureau
Mangaluru

Bayer has launched 'Xivana Smart', its latest fungicide innovation designed to protect high-value horticultural crops from diseases, such as downy mildew and late blight.

Powered by the new active ingredient in FRAC group 49, Xivana Smart delivers superior disease control in grapes, cucurbits, potatoes and tomatoes, helping farmers safeguard crop quality, improve productivity and maximise returns.

Downy mildew and late blight are among the most destructive diseases affecting horticultural crops, often accounting for nearly half of farmers' crop protection expenditure.

Agri university issues advisory for farmers

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Farmers have been advised to drain excess water from fields as soon as the rains subside and begin preventive plant protection measures

Thrissur: Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) has issued an advisory urging farmers to take immediate preventive measures to minimise crop losses from waterlogging and disease outbreaks.

The university, in a press release on Monday, said prolonged rainfall and high humidity have created favourable conditions for the spread of several bacterial and fungal diseases affecting major crops. Farmers have been advised to drain excess water from fields as soon as the rains subside and begin preventive plant protection measures.

In paddy fields, to prevent the spread of bacterial leaf blight, it has recommended spraying a mixture of 20g of Pseudomonas and 20ml of fresh cow dung extract per litre of water over the crop. Banana growers have been urged to ensure proper drainage around each plant and applying 5 litres of a solution containing

Black pepper, arecanut and nutmeg farmers have been advised to prevent water stagnation, collect and destroy infected leaves and dried twigs, and spray a 1% bordeaux mixture after the rains stop and the foliage has dried.

Vegetable crops, including tomato, chilli, brinjal, okra, cowpea, bitter gourd, snake gourd and cucumber, are also vulnerable to root rot, wilt, leaf spot and fruit rot during the current weather.

KAU also advised farmers not to spray pesticides or fungicides during rainfall. Plant protection measures should be carried out only after the rain has stopped and the foliage has dried sufficiently to ensure ef-

Artificial intelligence lifts Q1 global trade despite West Asia conflict: WTO

Our Bureau
New Delhi

THE OUTLOOK. WTO economists expect to see larger contractions in Middle East trade flows by the end of the year, together with stronger growth in Asia and North America

Global trade in goods grew faster than expected in the Q1 of 2026 despite the outbreak of the West Asia conflict as booming trade in artificial intelligence (AI)-related electronic components offset the negative impact of the disruptions which began in the final month of the quarter, the World Trade Organization (WTO) said on Friday.

The WTO, however, cautioned that the full impact of the conflict, including the disruption of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, would only become visible in Q2 trade data, with much steeper contractions expected in trade flows involving the Middle East/West Asia.

"The effects of the Strait of Hormuz disruption on world merchandise trade is expected to become visible primarily in data from April 2026 onward," the report said.

WORLD MERCHANDISE

According to recent WTO/UNCTAD data, the seasonally adjusted volume of world merchandise trade rose 1.9 per cent in the Q1 of 2026 compared to the previous quarter and 3.2 per cent (exceeding the earlier forecast of 1.9 per cent). "Strong trade in electronic components related to AI outweighed the negative effects of the outbreak of war in the Middle East, including disrupted shipments of goods through the Strait of Hormuz and dampened GDP growth in net fuel-importing countries due to higher energy prices," the report noted.

WTO economists expect to see larger contractions in Middle East trade flows by the end of the year, together with stronger growth in Asia and North America. "The global impact, meanwhile, will depend on whether it will be the AI boom or the Middle East conflict that predominates," the report stated.

The conflict has already taken a heavy toll on Middle East/West Asia trade, it noted.

The region's merchandise export volumes fell 9.7 per cent y-o-y in Q1, while imports declined 11.9 per cent. WTO estimates, based on available reporting country data, also showed world crude oil imports from the Middle East/West Asia falling by around 45 per cent in March, with imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and fertilizers declining 52 per cent and 26 per cent, respectively.

The WTO expects even larger contractions in the region's trade during Q2 as the disruption to shipping and energy supplies is more fully reflected in official statistics.

Asia emerged as the main engine of global trade growth, with exports rising 12.9 per cent and imports 14.6 per cent y-o-y. The expansion was led by strong intra-regional trade in AI-related goods, with China, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and Chinese Taipei recording particularly strong export growth.

North America's Q1 exports were up 7 per cent y-o-y. North American imports were down 10.7 per cent from Q1 of 2025, which saw a surge of imports due to front loading ahead of expected tariff increases.

Go chemical-free to tap global agri market, says PM

SAPTA DHARA: FARM STRENGTH

Manufacturing Boost | Must manufacture everything, be part of entire value chain

Agriculture & Food Production | Thrust on food processing, exports

Focus On Green & Blue Economy And Create Green Jobs | Grow the renewable energy and clean mobility space while tapping into marine and tourism sector opportunities

Tech & Innovation | Position India as global innovation hub

Soft Power | Expand the opportunities offered by yoga, traditional medicine, films and boost animation, gaming

Gati Shakti | Seamless connectivity

Raksha Shakti | Become self-reliant in defence, develop next-gen tech

Times News Network

New Delhi: Identifying agriculture and food production as the "second strength" of the seven streams (Sapta Dhara) of power that can take India to "new heights" in the next 5-7 years, PM Narendra Modi Saturday pitched for transitioning to chemical-free farming and creating integrated farm-to-export supply chains for millets, spices and fruits.

"We have to move from the farm to the export market. Whether it is our traditional cuisine, our millets, our spices, our fruits or our flowers, we have so much to offer. These should become global brands. Our farmers should give greater impetus to chemical-free farming, as the demand for such products is only going to increase across the world," said Modi. He said, "If our agricultural products meet global parameters in every respect, we will be able to reach markets across the world with ease."

Absence of supply chain is currently one of the main obstacles before farmers in moving towards crop diversification. Despite attempts to move towards climate-resilient millets, farmers have not found millets as attractive as water-guzzling sugarcane and paddy in terms of getting an assured income.

"We must move forward in the direction of food processing as well... Because of FTAs, we are getting access to a very large market, and we must reach them...," said the PM while outlining the Sapta Dhara.

FERTILISER SUBSIDY PROJECTIONS MAY MODERATE

Urea import prices fall 60% since Apr

SANDIP DAS
New Delhi, August 16

COST RELIEF

- Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers secured 1.7 MT of urea at **\$390-\$393**/tonne
- India ordered **4.2 MT** of urea between April and July; **3.5 MT** delivered

- Cheaper imports may ease subsidies, but FY27 costs could still exceed **₹2.17 lakh crore**

WITH EASING GLOBAL supplies and diversified imports, the landed cost of urea, India's most consumed soil nutrient variant, has declined by around 60% to \$390/tonne now, down from a peak of close to \$1,000/tonne in April.

In a major boost to supplies in the coming rabi season, the Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers (RCF), one of the three agencies entrusted with fertilizer imports, has finalised bids for imports of 1.7 million tonne (MT) of urea at a price range of \$390/tonne—\$393/tonne this month against the price range of \$ 935/tonne—\$959/tonne in April, 2026.

The National Fertilizers (NF) tender in June drew bids around \$449/tonne for urea. The three agencies entrusted with imports for fertilisers—NF, RCF and Indian Potash—have so far released import orders of 4.2 MT of urea during April-July, 2026, out of which 3.5 MT has been delivered so far.

In FY26, out of the total consumption of 40 MT of urea, about 10 MT was imported as finished product.

Officials said that with softening prices, the government will reassess the initial fertiliser subsidy budget projected at the beginning of the current fiscal year due to a price spike caused by the West Asia war. The government has spent over ₹70,000 crore in 2026-27 so far under fertiliser subsidies which is 40% of the budget estimate of ₹1.77 lakh crore due to the rise in global prices of soil nutrients since the West Asia war.

The actual subsidy is likely to be over ₹15,000-₹20,000 crore higher than the ₹2.17 lakh crore incurred in FY25. This is still much lower than the Department of Fertilizers' internal estimate in the middle of the serious supply disruptions in April-May, which suggested the subsidy bill could spike to even ₹3 lakh crore.

In FY26, expenditure on fertiliser subsidies was ₹2.17 lakh crore—₹1.42 lakh crore for urea and ₹74,999 crore for nutrient-based subsidy. This was a 17% increase over the revised estimate of ₹1.86 lakh crore. This, according to officials, is due to the rise in fertiliser prices from March 2026. Industry sources said that urea prices went up sharply since the beginning of the West Asia war as supplies of LNG were severely disrupted because of conflict.

As part of its diversification plan, the government has started importing urea from several countries including Oman, Malaysia, Vietnam, Georgia, Nigeria, Russia, Finland, Egypt, Algeria, Turkey, and the Netherlands. Import of other variants di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) and NPKs were procured from Russia, Morocco, Egypt, USA, Jordan, South Korea, Tunisia, and Saudi Arabia via the Red Sea.

According to the Department of Fertilizers, against the requirement of 11.88 MT of urea during April-July, 2026, the availability was 17.3 MT and sales of soil variants were over 10.7 MT. Similarly for DAP, against the requirement of 3.42 MT, 4.1 MT was available while sales were 2.54 MT.

Last time global conflict impacted the subsidy outgo was in FY23, when fertiliser subsidy was at a record Rs 2.54 lakh crore as shipping supplies through the red sea was impacted due to Ukraine-Russia conflict. India imports about 70% of its fertiliser and its raw material usage. Annual consumption of several variants of fertiliser in FY26 was over 70 MT.

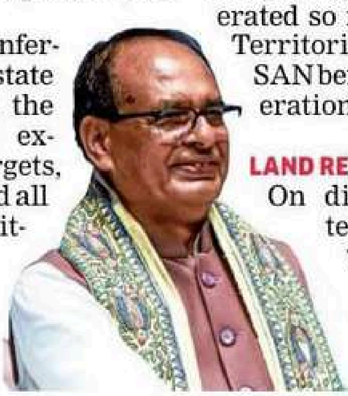
Chouhan Pushes States for 100% Farm Scheme Coverage

Centre already released funds to generate Farmer IDs: Minister

PTI

New Delhi: Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday asked states to achieve 100% saturation under the Digital Agriculture Mission and the Pulses Self-Reliance Mission, stressing that scheme benefits must reflect "in the fields and farmers' pockets", not merely in official reports.

Addressing a national conference at Pusa, Chouhan said state governments that executed the schemes with seriousness exceeded 100% of their targets, while others lagged. He asked all states to work within committed timelines.



The minister said the Farmer ID, under which payments are credited directly to farmers' bank accounts, is a key transparency measure.

Citing Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, he said the Centre had already released funds to generate Farmer IDs and conduct camps, but cautioned that meeting the one-month turnaround for IDs would require camps to run without fund diversion.

According to data shared at the conference, 10.41 crore Farmer IDs have been generated so far across 26 states and Union Territories, covering 84.68% of PM-KISAN beneficiaries and about 77% of operational landholdings.

LAND RECORDS, CROP SURVEY

On digital land records, Chouhan termed map integration and data verification the "backbone" of the mission, while acknowledging accuracy gaps in some areas due to crop and field-level variations.

Drones take the field in Indian agriculture

Driven by on-demand models, startups and government programmes are making the tech accessible and affordable for farmers, reports **Shine Jacob**

A revolution powered by precision, artificial intelligence, and data-driven insights is reshaping Indian agriculture, replacing heavy manual labour with tech-driven efficiency. Leading this wave is the "Uberisation of drones" — backed by startups and government policies — which allows farmers across the country to rent drones for farm operations via apps and portals as easily as booking a cab.

According to the Drone Federation of India (DFI) — which represents over 550 companies — players like Drogo Drones, Marut Drones, IoTechWorld, General Aeronautics, Drone Destination, and regional providers are building agriculture-focused drone networks and drone-as-a-service models. State governments are joining in too; in February, Andhra Pradesh became the first to let farmers book drone services online through its AP Drone Mart Portal, managed by the AP Drone Corporation.

The farm trend comes as India's drone ecosystem is fast evolving, with 38,500 registered drones overall, more than 39,890 certified pilots and 244 approved training organisations.

Drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles, can either be operated autonomously using pre-programmed instructions or controlled by human operators. The global commercial drone market is growing at a rate of 16-17 per cent per annum, according to a PwC report.

Drone ambitions

This agricultural demand aligns with India's goal to become a global drone manufacturing hub by 2030, a shift the report says will boost gross domestic product by 1-1.5 per cent and create at least 500,000 jobs.

Drones handle pesticide spraying, soil sampling, fertilising, livestock surveillance, real-time aerial imaging, and sensor data collection. AI-powered models further optimise operations, nutrient analysis, and crop yields by automating precision monitoring, field mapping and targeted spraying.

Beyond saving farmers time, these services optimise resource use, notably cutting water consumption. Dhaksha Drones, a leading manufacturer of drones, is integrating operations directly into a network of over 1,200 rural agri-retail stores run by its parent firm, Coromandel International. According to Dhaksha's plan, a trained graduate drone pilot will be stationed at each outlet to handle spraying and deliver comprehensive farm services directly to local farmers.

"Farmers can book these services directly at the store or through our digital platform. It is an 'Uberisation' model for farm-spraying services, through which a farmer can dial up or book through an app. With a retail network that connects us directly to over 5 million farmers, we have a strong foundation to scale this model and accelerate the adoption of precision agriculture across the country," said Sankarasubramanian S, managing director and chief executive officer of Coromandel International.

The drone industry covers around 5 per cent of the total farmland in India, said Prem Kumar Vislawath, founder of Marut Drones. India has approximately 444 million acres (180 million hectares) of agricultural land.

"Our drones are portable, and we already have around 800 micro-entrepreneurs who purchased the drone from us. These people are servicing almost 2 million farmers a year," said Vislawath. Marut is one of the largest farm drone manufacturers and has operations spread across Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh,

APP-DRIVEN SERVICE IS REPLACING MANUAL LABOUR, SLASHING WATER USAGE AND CREATING A BOOMING RURAL TECH SERVICE ECONOMY

Telangana, Odisha, and Gujarat. "These 2 million farmers spend around ₹3,000-5,000 per year with us for various crop operations," said Vislawath.

DFI believes these applications are not only driving drone sales, but also creating a massive distributed service economy — mirroring other sectors' shift from asset ownership to on-demand access. "The emergence of app-based drone-as-a-service models is an important next step in democratising access to drone technology, particularly in agriculture. A farmer does not necessarily need to invest ₹5-10 lakh in purchasing a drone, maintaining it and employing a trained pilot. Instead, drone spraying can increasingly be accessed as an on-demand service and paid for based on acreage," said Smit Shah, DFI's president.

"This can substantially improve utilisation of existing drones while creating viable businesses for drone operators, custom hiring centres and women's self-help groups (SHGs)," he added.

An activity requiring eight hours of manual labour takes a drone just 10 minutes. Drones slash water consumption by 90 per cent, using only 10 litres per acre compared to the 100–200 litres required by conventional spraying methods. Despite this speed advantage, renting a drone costs just ₹500–600 per acre. Beyond these savings, rapid deployment enables precise, timely nutrient application to spur crop growth, while high-resolution aerial imaging optimises land assessment, damage detection, and overall crop management.

"A major problem for the industry is that while we have 38,500 registered drones, we have many unregistered ones as well serving the market," said Pradeep Palelli, cofounder and chief executive officer of Thanos Technologies, an agricultural drone manufacturing company.

"This has to be stopped, as Chinese drones with a 30-40 per cent lower price are available in the market. Several single-person drone entrepreneurs, who are offering services in the agriculture sector, are using such drones," he said.

State support

Industry experts say the Kisan Drone programme, initiated by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in 2016, has helped agriculture. That programme was followed by the Civil Aviation Ministry introducing the Drone Rules, 2021 for using the technology in agriculture under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Scheme.

The Namo Drone Didi programme also acted as a catalyst: It has an outlay of ₹1,261 crore FY24 to FY26 to provide 15,000 drones to women's SHGs.

"The next step should be to build interoperable state-level platforms where farmers can discover nearby certified operators, see transparent pricing, book services and maintain a digital record of operations. The government's role should be to enable the marketplace and aggregate demand, rather than become the drone operator itself," said Shah, DFI's president.

"In the next five years, drones will be like tractors for the agriculture sector. We expect industry sales of around 500,000 drones by then," said Vislawath of Marut Drones.

As agricultural demand drives sales, the "Uberisation of drones" could soon dominate Indian farms.

INDIA MAY GET DUTY RELIEF FOR AUTO, PHARMA

Terms of trade pact with S Africa union this week

MUKESH JAGOTA
New Delhi, August 10

INDIA AND THE five-nation South African Customs Union (SACU) are expected to sign the Terms of Agreement (ToR) for the proposed Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) on Wednesday, sources said.

The PTA is less ambitious than a traditional Free Trade Agreement (FTA) but more focussed. A PTA gives lower duties on a specific "positive list" of items and rarely includes services, investments, or rules on intellectual property.

The ToR establishes the scope, objectives, procedural framework, and boundaries for trade negotiations between countries. The signing of the ToR comes at a time when South Africa, India's biggest trade partner in the region, has proposed an increase in duties on automobiles from India and China to 50% from 25%. Automobiles are the single biggest export from India to the region at $ 1.7 billion in 2025-26.

SACU comprises South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, and Eswatini (formerly Swaziland). On Saturday, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal had met South Africa's Minister of Trade and Industry Parka Tau on the sidelines of the BRICS Trade and Industry Ministers' Conference in Jaipur. Both sides discussed signing of the ToR of India-SACU PTA and early conclusion of negotiations, Goyal had posted on X after the meeting. Discussions also focussed on strengthening the India-South Africa trade engagement and opportunities for cooperation in critical minerals, pharma and manufacturing.

In the agreement, India would be seeking duty concessions for major export sectors—including automobiles and auto components, pharmaceuticals, machinery, electrical equipment, organic chemicals, and textiles.

India also aims to ensure a stable supply of key industrial inputs from SACU nations, such as diamonds, platinum group metals, manganese, vanadium, and copper to support domestic manufacturing and green transition goals.

India's total exports to the SACU region stood at $7.5 billion in 2025-26, while imports were at $9.2 billion. South Africa is the biggest trade partner of India in the region with exports of $7.0 billion and imports of $8.5 billion.

South Africa is followed by Namibia with exports of $349 million and imports of $243 million, Botswana with exports at $167 million and imports at $446 million. Exports to Swaziland were at $11 million and imports also at $11 million. Lesotho bought $8 million worth of goods from India and exported $0.14 million.

India's exports to SACU are dominated by petroleum products ($2.1 billion) automobiles ($ 1,7 billion), pharma ($ 763 million) and engineering goods and machinery.

The biggest imports by India from SACU include $3.0 billion worth of gold, $2.8 billion worth of coal and coke, $638 million minerals and ores, $ 887 million worth of precious and semi-precious stones $ 887 million and copper $ 376 million.

STRONGER PARTNERSHIP

- India and the five-nation SACU are expected to sign the Terms of Reference for the proposed Preferential Trade Agreement on Wednesday
- SACU comprises South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, and Eswatini (formerly Swaziland)
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- Automobiles are the single biggest export from India to the region at **$1.7 billion** in 2025-26
- South Africa is India's largest trading partner in SACU, accounting for $7 billion of exports and $8.5 billion of imports

LANKA, SINGAPORE TRANSHIPMENT JAM

Indian Exporters Suffer Twists & Turns of Freight

China seen hogging containers; feeder vessel crunch hiking rates, causing delays

Twesh Mishra & Kirtika Suneja

New Delhi: Congestion at the transhipment ports of Singapore and Colombo is causing a spillover effect in India, with exporters citing a lack of enough feeder vessels. There is a surge in China-US trade as well, causing more containers to be deployed between the two trading superpowers and reducing availability for others, sector watchers said.

This is also driving up freight rates globally. The rate for a 40-foot container between Shanghai and Los Angeles zoomed 133% year-on-year to $5,894 last week, according to maritime research consultancy Drewry. From Shanghai to New York, tariff increased 106% to $7,893.

"Chinese players are frontloading their American exports ahead of the Christmas rush," a sector watcher told ET. This is leading to a global container supply crunch, he said.

China's exports to the US grew around 17% in July from a year earlier, while imports rose 15%.

Domestic traders said a container imbalance fee is also being levied, and liners are "charging whatever they like."

Sunil Vaswani, executive director at the Container Shipping Lines Association, however, denied container shortages. "There is some congestion at transhipment ports like Singapore and Colombo, which could be causing some delays," he added.

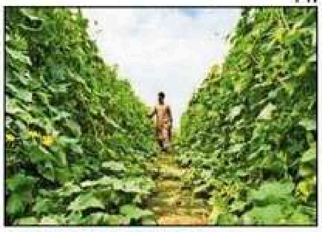
There is heavy congestion at Colombo and Singapore, and containers are getting held up, said a Chennai-based packaging producer. Feeder vessels are not available from Port Klang in Malaysia to Chennai, due to which routing happens through Singapore, he said.

Longer Waiting Time ▸▸ 8

'Precision agriculture betters yield, raises farmers' income'

Sribala.Vadlapatla
@timesofindia.com

PTI



SMART FARMING

Hyderabad: Precision agriculture — a farming method in which fertilisers are applied according to the nutrient needs of different parts of the same field rather than spreading the same quantity everywhere — could help Telangana's paddy farmers harvest more rice while spending less on fertilisers, a new study has found. Researchers found that matching fertiliser use to the condition of the soil increased paddy yields by up to 26% and almost doubled farmers' net income.

Researchers from Professor Jayashankar Telangana Agricultural University (PJTAU), SR University and other institutions conducted the study in Ganturpally village of Hanumakonda district. They collected 200 soil samples and discovered that soil fertility varied even within the same field. While some patches already had enough nutrients, others required additional fertiliser.

Instead of following the conventional practice of applying the same amount of fertiliser across the entire field, the scientists divided the land into three soil fertility zones using GPS-based soil mapping and computer analysis. Each zone was then given only the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium it actually required.

The results showed that farmers could reduce nitrogen use by nearly 39%, potassium by 50%, while some areas did not require any phosphorus fertiliser because the soil already contained sufficient amounts.

Even with lower fertiliser use, paddy yield increased from 53 quintals per hectare to nearly 67 quintals per hectare. Net returns also rose sharply, from about ₹50,000 per hectare to more than ₹93,000 per hectare.

The researchers suggested that extending such soil mapping to other paddy-growing regions could make rice cultivation in Telangana more profitable and environmentally sustainable.

Kharif sowing close to 2025 levels

UBS Securities sees rural demand holding up despite El Niño

SANJEEB MUKHERJEE
New Delhi, 10 August

Gap narrows

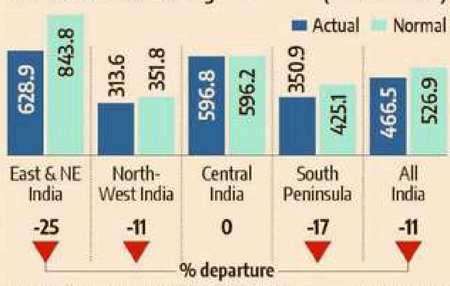
Kharif sowing as on August 7 (in million hectares)

Crop	Normal area	2026	% change over 2025
Paddy	41.2	34.5	-4.4
Pulses	13.0	10.4	-1.9
Arhar	4.4	3.8	-6.5
Urad	3.0	2.3	12.9
Moong	3.5	3.1	-5.7
Coarse cereals	18.3	16.9	-2.7
Maize	8.1	8.7	-3.9
Oilseeds	20.0	18.0	3.0
Soybean	12.9	12.0	0.3
Groundnut	4.7	4.7	8.6
Sugarcane	5.4	5.8	-0.5
Cotton	12.6	10.6	-0.4
Total	**110.4**	**96.8**	**-1.8**

Note: Total might not match as only broad crop categories were considered
Source: Agriculture ministry

Rains revive

Monsoon rainfall till August 9 (in millimetres)



Note: Figures have been rounded off
Source: IMD

Sowing of kharif crops nearly reached 2025 levels in the week ended August 7, as rainfall continued to lash parts of India, albeit with occasional breaks.

The performance of the monsoon over the next few weeks will be crucial in determining the kharif harvest and whether soil moisture remains adequate for the early sowing of rabi crops.

Meanwhile, Tanvee Gupta Jain, chief India economist at UBS Securities, said a sharp decline in rural demand in FY27 due to a below-par monsoon appeared unlikely, citing stronger household balance sheets after two consecutive good crop years, continued government spending and welfare transfers, and supportive credit conditions.

In a note titled "Rural Demand at Crossroads", Jain said that these factors should cushion rural incomes and provide a buffer to consumption.

UBS expects rural demand to remain more resilient than in previous episodes of monsoon-related stress, although growth could moderate from current levels.

Despite concerns over El Niño, improved farm cash flows (from the previous two good monsoon years), government welfare transfers, GST-related benefits and strong credit growth have likely boosted rural household purchasing power and supported consumption growth so far this fiscal, Jain said.

A timely reset for the Food Security Act

Viswanathan Mohan
Chairman, Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, Chennai

Soumya Swaminathan
Chairperson, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai

Nijina M. Nazar
Principal Project Scientist, Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai

India's food security debate has entered a new phase. Estimates based on India's latest household consumption survey suggest that the share of households unable to afford the ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) recommended diet fell from about 52% in 2011-12 to about 25% in 2023-24, affecting 25% of rural and 21% of urban households. This is substantial progress, but crores of households still cannot afford an adequate healthy diet. Poverty, hunger and inability to afford a healthy diet overlap; a modern food-security policy must recognise that they are not identical.

The draft National Food Security (Amendment) Bill, 2026 links Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) entitlements to household size. The policy challenge is to correct inequity without reducing existing foodgrain access, while creating a pathway towards nutrition security.

Designing a fairer entitlement

Priority Households receive 5 kg of foodgrains per person per month, while AAY households receive a flat 35 kg per household. The latter protects smaller and highly vulnerable families but provides progressively less per person as household size grows: a seven-member household receives 5 kg per person and an eight-member household about 4.4 kg, below the Priority Household entitlement. The draft proposes 7 kg per person, capped at 35 kg. This would reduce support for households with one to four members by 20% to 80%, leave those with five or more unchanged, and provide no AAY household with additional foodgrain.

Tamil Nadu illustrates the potential impact. The State government reports that 15.75 lakh of its 18.64 lakh AAY households (84.5%) have fewer than five members. It estimates that the proposal would reduce the monthly AAY allocation from 65,261 tonnes to 42,040 tonnes, a fall of about 35.6%. Although specific to Tamil Nadu, these projections show why household composition and vulnerability must be considered: a smaller household may include an older person living alone, a widow or a person with disability.

As the proposal is taken forward, the existing 35 kg entitlement should be preserved through an explicit no-loss safeguard. Because retaining 35 kg as both the minimum and maximum would leave the per-person formula with no practical effect, support beyond 35 kg for larger or highly dependent households should be examined as a separate policy question using household-consumption evidence, nutritional requirements and transparent fiscal costing.

Entitlement reform must also address coverage. Although the NFSA allows coverage of up to 75% of the rural and 50% of the urban population, its 81.35-crore beneficiary ceiling remains based on Census 2011; about 80 crore people receive free foodgrains. Against the estimated population of 146.4 crore in 2025, this ceiling covers only 55.6%. It should be recalculated when the Census 2027 figures become available. Meanwhile, updated population estimates and deprivation criteria could support a transparent review, with accessible inclusion and appeal mechanisms.

> The proposed amendment offers an opportunity to preserve the 35 kg AAY entitlement, assess the needs of larger households, and finance a gradual transition toward more diverse and nutritious diets

Protecting grain while diversifying diets

Protecting the grain entitlement does not mean preserving a cereal-only understanding of food security. NFHS-6 (2023-24) found that stunting among children under five fell from 35.5% to 29.3%, but wasting and underweight barely changed, from 19.3% to 19.0% and 32.1% to 31.8%, respectively. Only about 15% of children (six-23 months) receive a minimally adequate diet. Meanwhile, the ICMR-India Diabetes (INDIAB) study estimated that 101 million Indians had diabetes and 136 million had prediabetes in 2021. These figures reflect India's double burden of malnutrition. Maternal undernutrition and low birth weight are associated with greater risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) later in life, while present-day diet and other behavioural factors add further risk.

Foodgrain entitlement should not itself be equated with diabetes risk. The concern is that a predominantly cereal-based food basket, when combined with diets already high in carbohydrates and low in protein-rich foods, may reinforce dietary imbalance. The solution is not to reduce essential cereal entitlements, but to finance dietary diversification alongside.

The dietary evidence favours balance over simply increasing or substituting cereals. A 2025 ICMR-INDIAB study of 18,090 adults found carbohydrates supplied 62.3% of daily energy nationally and protein 12%. Adults with the highest carbohydrate intake had 30% higher odds of newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes than those with the lowest intake. Replacing refined cereals with whole-wheat or millet flour was not linked to lower risk when the carbohydrate share remained high. Modelling suggested greater benefit from replacing some carbohydrate calories with protein-rich foods.

These observational and modelled findings cannot establish that changing the Public Distribution System (PDS) basket will prevent diabetes, but caution against treating more grain or millets alone as a complete nutrition policy. The ICMR-NIN's 2024 guidelines recommend that cereals and millets provide at most 45% of energy, with greater contributions from pulses, beans, milk, nuts, vegetables, fruits and other protein sources.

The PDS cannot supply the entire healthy plate; it can best provide affordable, shelf-stable foods. States should be supported to offer pulses, local rice, wheat and millet choices and, where feasible, healthy edible oils. Local production and consumption should guide supply chains and effective Minimum Support Price (MSP) procurement for pulse, millet and oilseed growers. Sustained public investment should link food, nutrition and health systems through complementary programmes: the PDS, Anganwadi services for young children and pregnant or lactating women, and Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) for schoolchildren. These programmes could provide eggs, milk or suitable alternatives where locally acceptable and feasible. Dietary diversification must be separately budgeted, not financed by reducing cereal entitlements. The 2026-27 Union Budget allocates ₹2,27,629 crore to food subsidy, underscoring the need for transparent costing. Additions should be tested through phased State pilots assessing actual consumption, dietary diversity, anaemia and glycaemic risk, household spending, wastage, exclusion and supply feasibility. Pilot evidence can guide fiscally sustainable expansion and help assess potential longer-term health and fiscal benefits.

Linking food access with nutrition support

The NFSA's strength lies in guaranteeing reliable, dignified food access. India has built a formidable delivery network. By the end of 2025, 5.50 lakh of 5.51 lakh fair price shops used electronic point-of-sale devices, while One Nation One Ration Card covered nearly all NFSA beneficiaries. These systems support portability and monitoring but must include reliable offline alternatives, assisted or doorstep access for people with limited mobility, and a clear guarantee that authentication failure will not lead to denial of entitled foodgrains.

Fair price shops could support last-mile nutrition information and referral. Simple multilingual receipt, display, voice and mobile messages could promote dietary diversity, appropriate cereal portions, pulses, healthier oils, and less salt and added sugar. Where feasible, trained health workers could undertake periodic outreach through India's primary-health infrastructure, linking willing adults to government diabetes, hypertension and other NCD services. By June 2026, India had over 1.86 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, while government data recorded 41.3 crore diabetes screenings. Fair price shop dealers should facilitate information and referral, not diagnose or counsel. Participation must be voluntary, confidential and unrelated to ration eligibility or authentication.

The amendment should therefore be situated within a broader architecture for food and nutrition security, anchored in three safeguards. First, any per-person formula should preserve the existing 35 kg monthly entitlement for every AAY household through an explicit no-loss guarantee. Second, the adequacy of the 35 kg ceiling should be reviewed periodically for larger households and those with high dependency or nutritional needs, using consumption, nutritional and fiscal evidence. Third, dietary diversification must be separately financed and progressively implemented without reducing existing cereal entitlements.

India's next food security reform must protect people from hunger while also addressing the dietary drivers of diabetes and other NCDs. Its success should be judged not only by the tons of grain moved, but by whether vulnerable families can eat enough, eat healthier and obtain their entitlements with dignity.

Paddy surge after late July monsoon worries officials

Expert panel advised curbs on paddy in 399 water-stressed mandal

BALU PULIPAKA I DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 7

The recent widespread rain not only brought some cheer to the farming community but also dread to the agriculture department that is watching a surge in paddy planting.

Till the rain of late July cut down the 30 per cent deficit, the government expected that overall paddy cultivation would fall by around 32 lakh acres against the normal of around 69 lakh acres. Official estimated the projected area under paddy for this season as 38.51 lakh acres as of mid-July.

Estimates now place the expected paddy area to be around 54 lakh acres, with farmers who grew paddy previously expected to leave only 15 lakh acres without this crop this season. "If the IMD predictions hold, then we will have a long dry spell from middle of August and into September. The question is what will happen if there are no more rains," a senior government official said.

Despite a determined effort by the agriculture department to push farmers away from paddy, "there are no takers for it right now," the official said. "The momentum for raising alternative irrigated dry crops was washed away by the July rain." Incidentally, the expert committee on El Nino impacts mitigation had called on the government to issue an administrative directive declaring a 'no additional paddy' mandate prohibiting new paddy nursery transplantation under borewells and rain-fed regions in 399 water-stressed mandals for the Vanakalam 2026 season.

It may be recalled that the expert committee, led by Planning Board vice-chairman G. Chinna Reddy, submitted its report to the Chief Minister, who chairs the board, on July 30.

Sources said that if the IMD predictions of a dry rest of August, and as well as September hold, then the only option is to look towards the Bay of Bengal and hope for another depression, as the one in July, to form and bring more rains to Telangana.

"If that does not happen, then paddy farmers could be in serious trouble," the sources added.

PADDY PARADOX

- Copious July rain may haunt paddy farmers,
- Area under paddy till July 15: 32 lakh acres,
- Estimates after July rain: 54 lakh acres,
- IMD predicts a dry August, September,
- How farmers planted paddy during Kharif,

YEAR	AREA*
2023	65,94,252
2024	66,78,320.65
2025	69,89,228.10

*in acres

- **OFFICIAL ESTIMATED** the projected area under paddy for this season as 38.51 lakh acres as of mid-July.

Irrigation demand surges amid paddy boom in state

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 7

A mid-season surge in planting paddy is learnt to have resulted in increasing pressure on the irrigation department to ensure adequate water reaches farmers growing rice this Kharif crop season.

With the recent rain not only resulting in good inflows into smaller, but also inflows into several reservoirs, there appears to be a perception that the government will have no option but to provide irrigation water for the Kharif crops, particularly paddy. However, the reality appeared otherwise.

Sources in the irrigation department acknowledged that there was increasing pressure from elected representative, and farmers, for irrigation, at least for transplanting paddy. "If water is released for transplanting, or initial operations, then the question will come why not later and if the government was not able to provide irrigation throughout the crop season, why did it do so in the beginning," the sources said.

Though the agriculture and irrigation and other ministers have been pointing out the need to conserve all available water to meet drinking water needs till at least July of next year, there has not been a clear directive or a categorical announcement from the government so far that water will not be supplied for irrigating paddy, or for that matter, any other crop this Kharif season.

The government, sources said, was pinning its hopes on a late monsoon revival, and that it would not have to bite the no irrigation this year bullet, but that hope, at least for now, remains a big uncertainty.

"Until a clear announcement is made that there will be no irrigation water for any crop, farmers will expect irrigation. And the pressure on the irrigation department is only expected to increase once the now tapering off rain spell makes way for a prolonged dry period," an official said.

It was learnt that despite the pressure for water release, officials in charge of various reservoirs had been told not to entertain such 'requests' for now. Sources said that the government was finding itself caught in a cleft stick – it could not make what could be a politically sensitive 'no irrigation' declaration for the farmer's favourite crop, and neither could it say it could provide irrigation.

STATE DROPS CROP INSURANCE THIS YEAR

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 7

Farmers who may have had a sliver of hope of some form of crop insurance option coming into effect this Kharif crop season amidst continuing concerns over how the rest of the monsoon season is likely to play out, may have to wait another year.

Though a committee of experts, led by the Planning Board vice-chairman G. Chinna Reddy in its 'Report of the Expert Committee on El Nino Preparedness and Mitigation' recommended that a comprehensive crop insurance scheme be introduced to safeguard farmers against adverse weather conditions and crop losses, it is learnt that the proposal is unlikely to be implemented this year.

It is learnt that the recommendation was more in the nature of a generalised suggestion, and was not necessarily meant for immediate implementation.

"If attempts are made to implement crop insurance now, given the vagaries associated with El Nino hit monsoon, the premia will be sky high. This same condition is expected to be in place even for the next Rabi crop season. This means if the next year's monsoon is expected to be normal, then the government may consider going ahead with a plan to introduce crop insurance," sources familiar with discussions surrounding the issue in the government said.

India to grow world's 1st gene edited rice this winter

SETTING THE BALL ROLLING. ICAR is expected to sign an MoU this month with US-based Corteva, which holds the licence for CRISPR-Cas9 gene-editing tech

Prabhudatta Mishra
New Delhi

More than a year after its announcement, one of India's two gene-edited rice varieties is set to be planted in the upcoming rabi season for seed multiplication.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is expected to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) this month with the US-based Corteva, which holds the license for the CRISPR-Cas9 gene-editing technology.

Highly placed sources said that ICAR had received 2 of the 3 approvals, including one from the Ministry of External Affairs, required to sign the MoU with Corteva; once the third one is received, the agreement will be signed.

The signing of the MoU will pave the way for the commercial release of "Pusa DST Rice 1", developed by ICAR's New Delhi-based Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI).

"First, the MoU will be signed with Corteva and the next will be with the US-based MIT/Broad institute, which has the patent over the CRISPR-CaS12a tool," said a top official. The CRISPR-CaS12a tool was used to develop DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala), developed by the Hyderabad-based Indian Institute of Rice Research.

SEED MULTIPLICATION

On May 4, 2025, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the breakthrough of ICAR's scientists in which, for the first time, two rice varieties had been developed using gene editing technology.

TO BE SIGNED SOON. ICAR has received 2 of the 3 approvals, including one from the Ministry of External Affairs, required to sign the MoU with Corteva

Sources said that IARI had already kept about 2 tonnes of Pusa DST Rice 1, which is sufficient for starting seed multiplication in the upcoming rabi season, with transplanting around November.

Pusa DST Rice 1 is derived from MTU1010, which is suitable for rabi season in the southern States. Since MTU1010 is sensitive to several abiotic stresses, including drought and salinity, scientists edited the SDNI mutant of the drought and salt tolerance (DST) gene. It was tested in multilocation field trials during 2023 and 2024. Pusa DST Rice 1 exhibits an average yield of 2,493, 3,508 and 3731 kg/ha (under three different conditions) against MTU 1010's 1,912 kg/ha under coastal salinity stress, 3,199 kg/ha under inland salinity stress and 3,254kg/ha under alkalinity condition.

ICAR recommends Pusa DST Rice 1 to be grown in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

AI-DESIGNED ENZYMES

Before the MoU was signed with ICAR, Corteva signed a long-term humanitarian licensing agreement. Announcing the partnership, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (Icrisat) on August 3 said it had secured long-term access to CRISPR-Cas9 in order to deploy gene editing, one of the world's most transformative new technologies, across smallholder Asian and African farms.

Scientists said there is no issue while using the patented tool for research, but due to the Intellectual Property Rights of the technology, any commercialisation of new varieties from that research is prohibited, unless the patent holder or its licensee agrees to it.

On the other hand, the ICAR scientists, led by Kutubuddin Ali Molla, showed that AI-designed enzymes could accurately edit plant DNA, enabling gene knockout, base editing and prime editing in crops.

Haryana picks two sites for digital fertiliser sale

CHANDIGARH: The Haryana government has chosen Mahendragarh and Kaithal for the pilot implementation of the Framework for Fertilizer Sales (FFS), signalling a shift towards advance digital booking and traceable distribution of subsidised fertilisers in the state. The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi here on Monday, where the government also examined the proposed mechanism for linking cultivator information available on the Meri Fasal Mera Byora (MFMB) portal with the Farmer Registry.

Fertiliser supplies for Rabi on track despite Hormuz disruption

Pallavi Singhal

letters@hindustantimes.com

India produces about three-fourths of its annual 39 million tonne urea requirement. AP

NEW DELHI: India's fertiliser supplies for the upcoming Rabi season appear secure despite continuing disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz, with the country's latest urea import tender attracting bids well above the required quantity, signalling easing supply concerns ahead of the winter sowing season, according to industry executives and analysts. The development comes at a crucial time as fertiliser companies typically lock in imports during August so that cargoes reach Indian ports in September and October, just ahead of peak Rabi (winter sowing season) demand.

Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers Ltd (RCF) on July 29 floated a tender to import 1.7 million tonnes of bulk urea— 1 million tonnes for the west coast and 0.7 million tonnes for the east coast — excluding suppliers from sanctioned countries. The bidding closed on August 11 and attracted bids for substantially more than the required quantity for September deliveries, according to market insiders cited by Swati Mathur, associate director, agribusiness consulting, S&P Global Commodity Insights.

India requires around 39 million tonnes of urea annually but produces about three-fourths of its requirement domestically, importing the remaining 8 million tonnes. The conflict in West Asia had raised concerns because around 70% of India's imported urea and nearly 60% of its liquefied natural gas (LNG) — the primary feedstock for domestic urea production — normally transit the Strait of Hormuz. With shipping routes disrupted, India accelerated efforts to diversify fertiliser imports beyond its traditional Gulf suppliers. Industry estimates show India has already contracted more than 5 million tonnes of urea this year — nearly two-thirds of its expected imports. A senior government official told HT that the department of fertilisers has expanded procurement efforts by exploring new sourcing opportunities through Indian missions abroad to reduce dependence on any single region. "These measures are aimed at strengthening the fertiliser supply chain, reducing vulnerabilities arising from global market disruptions and ensuring the uninterrupted availability of fertilisers in the country," the official said.

Sale of substandard maize seed banned

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Neemuch

The Department of Farmers' Welfare and Agriculture Development and the Seed Licensing Authority, Neemuch, have imposed an immediate ban on the purchase, sale and transportation of a maize seed lot found to be below the prescribed quality standards during lab oratory testing.

The action followed the collection of a seed sample by the Seed Inspector under Clause 13(C) of the Seeds (Control) Order, 1983. The sample was subsequently sent to the Seed Testing Laboratory in Ujjain for quality assessment. The laboratory report confirmed that the seed lot did not meet the prescribed quality standards.

The seed lot covered by the ban carries Laboratory Test No. 272625. According to the order, the seed was being sold by Paliwal Beej Bhandar, Neemuch, while Hi-Tech Seed India Pvt. Ltd. is listed as its manufacturer. The seed belongs to the MAIZE variety HTMH-5402.

The authorities have taken the action under the provisions of the Seeds (Control) Order, 1983, after establishing a violation of Section 6 of the Seeds Act, 1966.

Exercising the powers conferred under Section 11 of the Seeds (Control) Order, 1983, the Seed Licensing Authority has prohibited the purchase, sale and transportation of the specified seed lot with immediate effect.

The restriction will remain applicable throughout Neemuch district. The move is aimed at preventing the distribution and use of seed that has failed to meet the prescribed quality standards and protecting farmers from potential losses arising from the use of substandard agricultural inputs.

As sowing deficit narrows, govt does not see much impact on kharif crops from El Nino

Our Bureau
New Delhi

A day after an European forecaster predicted that the severity of El Nino's impact on monsoon will grow, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday said the impact on kharif production this year is unlikely to be significant, as the gap in sown area continues to narrow despite deficient rainfall in a few pockets.

Speaking to the media after an event organised by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Chouhan said kharif crops had received adequate rainfall for growth in most parts of the country, bringing down the number of vulnerable districts from 262 to around 100. "We don't see a huge impact of El Nino, except in some places. The situation by and large remains good. Rainfall was sufficient to meet the full water needs of the crops" he said.

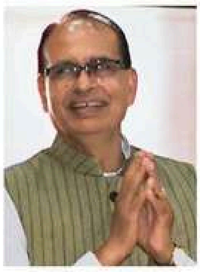
"We still have to review the situation as it is changing daily," he said.

LOCALISED IMPACT

As of now, no impact is foreseen, though Karnataka and Telangana are facing water shortages.

The overall sowing has been good, but he did not rule out localised impact on lower yield.

The Minister reiterated that both the Seeds Bill and the Pesticides Management Bill were ready and would be tabled in Parliament in the next session.



Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Though the Minister has been announcing it for quite some time before each session, the government did not list these Bills for daily 'business'.

Earlier Chouhan administered a pledge to officials of the Agriculture and Rural Development Ministries under the "Shakti ki Saptdhara" (Seven streams of empowerment) framework announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address.

The seven-pronged framework, unveiled from the Red Fort, prioritises strengthening agriculture and food production, expanding food processing and improving farmers' access to global markets.

LARGER CHALLENGE

Chouhan said that the roadmap for the two Ministries to achieve the government's "Viksit Bharat" vision for 2047 had been discussed with stakeholders and will be finalised soon.

Sowing area under all kharif crops has reached 92 per cent of the season's normal area of 1104.46 lakh hectares (lh) while the deficit from the year-ago level has narrowed to less than 1 per cent until August 14 from 1.8 per cent until August 7.

The sowing area in the ongoing kharif season has reached 1,016.57 lh as of August 14, compared with 1,037.52 lh in the year-ago period.

On the other hand, the overall monsoon rainfall, which was 35 per cent (as per the revised data) deficient in June and 1 per cent surplus in July, has now shrunk to 13 per cent below normal during June 1-August 18. A total of 361 out of 741 districts have reported rainfall deficit of 20 per cent or higher, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) data show.

The rainfall during August 1-18 was 13 per cent below normal.

Fertilizer shortage triggers protests by farmers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Rayagada, Nabarangpur, 2 Aug:

Farmers in several districts of the state have hit the streets protesting against the acute shortage of fertilizers , particularly urea and the blackmaketeering that is taking place.

In Rayagada district have threatened to launch a large-scale protest if the ongoing shortage of fertilizers is not addressed immediately, alleging that black marketing and overpricing have severely affected Kharif cultivation.

Farmers said government cooperative societies have failed to supply adequate quantities of fertilizers, forcing them to buy from private dealers at exorbitant rates. They alleged that a bag of urea, priced at ₹266.50, is being sold for nearly ₹700, while DAP, officially priced at ₹1,350, is being sold for around ₹2,250.

The situation is particularly acute in the Mukundpur LAMPS under Kolnara block, where around 5,000–6,000 farmers from seven panchayats depend on fertilizer supplies. Farmers alleged that limited distribution through cooperatives has enabled private dealers to exploit the shortage.

According to the Agriculture Department, the district requires 14,450 metric tonnes of urea but has received only 12,169.40 metric tonnes. Against a requirement of 4,525 metric tonnes of DAP, only 2,443.75 metric tonnes has been supplied.

Farmers warned of a massive agitation if the crisis continues.

Reports from Ganjam, Jharsuguda and other districts including Nabarangpur said farmers are agitated.

Hundreds of farmers in Nabarangpur district blocked the road near Raighar forcing the administration to introduce a token-based distribution system. Farmers, including a large number of women, gathered outside the Local Agricultural Marketing and Primary Cooperative Society (LAMPCS) office in Raighar from early morning, waiting for hours to procure essential fertilisers, particularly urea.

The situation turned tense when many farmers failed to receive fertilisers due to inadequate stock. Agitated over the scarcity, they staged a raasta roko, blocking the main road and disrupting vehicular movement for several hours.

Police personnel and local administrative officials rushed to the spot after being informed of the protest. Following discussions with the agitating farmers, officials assured them that additional steps would be taken to streamline fertiliser distribution and address the shortage.

Commerce Department kicks off pre-Budget consultations with industry

Amiti Sen
New Delhi

The Commerce Department has begun consultations with industry for the Union Budget 2027-28, seeking tax, customs and procedural reform proposals before submitting its recommendations to the Finance Ministry, amid global trade uncertainty caused by the West Asia crisis and US tariff actions.

Export promotion councils and industry bodies have been asked to submit detailed proposals, supported by data and sector-specific justification, as part of the annual Budget exercise.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal

> **BUDGET PUSH**
> Industry is likely to push for extension of export incentives, customs duty rationalisation and lower compliance costs, among other measures

POLICY CAUTION

In a communication to stakeholders, the department said proposals relating to GST would not be considered, and advised them against resubmitting long-pending demands that have been repeatedly rejected by the government.

Instead, industry is being encouraged to prioritise fresh recommendations, while repeat proposals must be accompanied by the details of similar submissions made over the past three years and their order of priority.

"Exporters are likely to press for measures to improve competitiveness as there is growing uncertainty in the global trade environment because of the West Asia crisis and Trump's tariffs. Compliance costs, too, are rising. Issues such as extension of export incentive schemes, particularly expansion of the interest equalisation scheme, rationalisation of customs duties on key raw materials and intermediates, simplification of customs procedures, and tax measures to encourage manufacturing and investment, are expected to be highlighted," an industry source told *businessline*.

INDUSTRY'S DEMAND

For proposals involving changes in customs duties or indirect taxes, industry has been asked to provide details on the prevailing duty structure, price trends, domestic demand and supply position, import and export data, and an assessment of the likely impact of the proposed changes.

Direct tax proposals are to be accompanied by detailed justification and indicate whether legislative amendments would be required. While announcing the Union Budget 2026-27 in February this year, the Finance Minister said that her proposals for customs and central excise aimed to further simplify the tariff structure, support domestic manufacturing, promote export competitiveness, and correct inversion in duty.

EXPORT BOOST

Some measures announced to boost manufacturing and exports in Budget 2026-27 included raising duty-free import entitlement for specified seafood processing inputs from 1 per cent to 3 per cent of the previous year's export turnover, extending similar benefits to shoe upper exporters, and doubling the export obligation period for leather and textile exporters to one year.

It also exempted basic customs duty on specified aircraft components and raw materials used in manufacturing parts for maintenance, repair and overhaul operations and defence units, besides granting duty exemption on specified parts used in the manufacture of microwave ovens to encourage value addition in consumer electronics.

To deepen value addition in the consumer electronics sector, the Budget proposed to exempt basic customs duty on specified parts used in the manufacture of microwave ovens.

Rules on availing agri subsidies amended after flaws detected

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
New Delhi, August 23

ALMOST TWO MONTHS after an investigation by *The Indian Express* revealed a Union Minister and a serving Central government secretary's kin availing subsidy for their cucumber farms, the Centre has amended the 'Scheme Guidelines of Commercial Horticulture and Cold Storage Schemes' of the National Horticulture Board (NHB). It has revised the definition of 'family' – bringing within its ambit the subsidy applicant's spouse, father, mother, sons and daughters – and has made holders of constitutional posts, serving ministers, MPs, MLAs, mayors, district panchayat chiefs and government employees ineligible for financial assistance under NHB schemes.

The NHB, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, amended the scheme guidelines on August 21.

"With a view to rationalise financial assistance, ensure equitable distribution of benefits, prevent duplication of subsidy, and make the implementation of the Schemes more transparent and effective, following amendments in the Scheme Guidelines shall be applicable with immediate effect," read a circular issued by the NHB.

The scheme — Development of Commercial Horticulture through Production and Post-Harvest Management of Horticulture Crops — is aimed at promoting commercial farming (for profit) of horticultural crops on a large scale. The crops under the scheme are three types of vegetables – capsicum, cucumber and tomato; and eight varieties of flowers including rose, lilium and chrysanthemum. The scheme offered a maximum subsidy of 50 per cent, capped at Rs 1 crore per family, of the project cost.

Under the new guidelines, the government has made clear that five categories of people shall not be eligible for financial assistance under NHB Schemes.

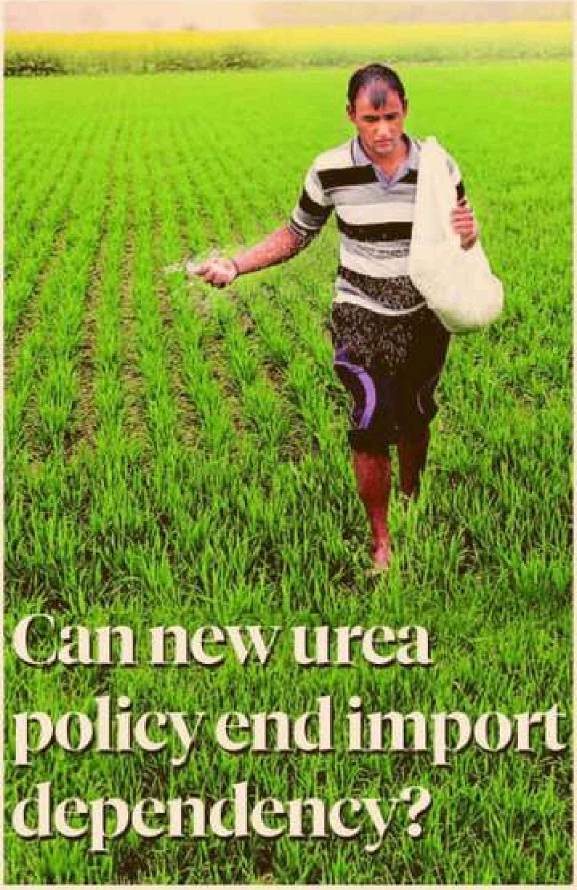
"Family members of persons falling in the above categories may, however, avail one-time assistance, subject to the applicable provisions of the revised definition of family," the new guidelines said.

The revised definition of 'family' is as follows: "For the purpose of determining eligibility under NHB Schemes, the term 'family' shall comprise the applicant's spouse, father, mother, sons and daughters."

As per the old guidelines, the term 'family' was defined as "the husband, wife, and dependent minor children."

On June 27, The Indian Express reported that Bhagirath Choudhary, Minister of State in the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, availed Rs 99 lakh subsidy for his farm in 2025 under the NHB's scheme 'Development of Commercial Horticulture through Production and Post-Harvest Management of Horticulture Crops.' A month later, Choudhary returned the subsidy amount to the government.

The investigation by The Indian Express also showed that the wife, son and mother of senior IAS officer Naresh Pal Gangwar, who is currently serving as the Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD), were among the beneficiaries of the scheme. The government had appointed Gangwar as the Higher Education Secretary on July 23, but even before his joining, his appointment was cancelled (on August 10).



Can new urea policy end import dependency?

Rising demand, subsidy distortions and weak private participation are things to watch out for

SANJEEB MUKHERJEE
New Delhi, 2 August

Earlier this month, after a gap of almost 14 years, the Union Cabinet approved a new National Investment Policy for Urea (NIPU-2026) with the objective of setting up 8-9 gas-based urea plants — both brownfield and greenfield — with a combined production capacity of 10 million tonnes (mt) in a fresh stab at self-reliance over the next few years.

Under the new framework — an extension of the 2012 New Investment Policy (NIP) with some revisions — plants will be set up in both the private and public sector, and even by cooperatives.

Releasing the policy, Union information and broadcasting minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that India's urea consumption is around 40 mt, while current domestic production is close to 30 mt, with the gap being filled by imports. The new policy is expected to help bridge that gap.

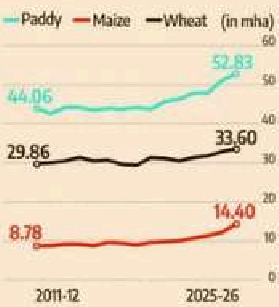
Each of the new plants will have a production capacity of around 1.27 million tonnes per annum.

The approximate project cost per plant is expected to be ₹11,000 crore for the greenfield category and ₹9,000 crore for brownfields, said sources, based on an exchange rate of ₹90 to the dollar. This would put the cumulative investment by way of the new policy close to ₹90,000 crore-₹1 trillion over the next 5-8 years.

Key changes from NIP-2012 include the separation of fixed and variable costs for greater transparency, introduction of a viable return on equity (RoE) band with a floor at 12 per cent and a ceiling at 16 per cent, and mitigation of foreign exchange risks through conversion of fixed costs into rupees after four years, based on prevailing exchange rates.

"These measures are estimated to result in savings of over ₹250 crore for each plant established under NIPU-2026 compared to NIP-2012," the government said.

Acreage of major cereals



Urea consumption

Note: Acreage based on crop year basis and urea consumption on FY basis; mt: million tonnes and mha: million hectares; #estimated;
Sources: Ministry of Agriculture, Fertiliser Association of India

Mounting pressure

India currently imports around 26 per cent of its annual urea requirement, which has placed a heavy burden on the exchequer because of the West Asia crisis. More than half of this comes from Oman through the besieged Strait of Hormuz.

But the NIP considerably predates the current West Asia crisis — the Centre has been tweaking the NIP multiple times since 2012 to suit the requirements of fertiliser companies and fine-tune it per changing dynamics, be it gas pricing or fixed cost calculations.

Under the NIP 2012, which expired in October 2019, six new urea units were set up. Of these, four were established through joint ventures with companies of nominated public sector units (PSUs), and two by private companies.

They added a production capacity of 7.62 mt, thereby increasing total indigenous capacity from 20.75 mt in 2014-15 to 28.37 mt in 2023-24.

Thereafter, the government approved another exclusive policy for reviving the Talcher unit of Fertiliser Corporation of India Ltd through a joint venture company of nominated PSUs. The resultant Talcher Fertilisers Ltd was a new greenfield urea plant to produce 1.27 mt of urea by coal gasification route. More recently, a few years back, the Union Cabinet also approved another proposal to set up a new brownfield ammonia urea complex of 1.27 mt capacity within the existing premises of Brahmaputra Valley Fertiliser Corporation Ltd in Namrup, Assam.

As a result of all these, India currently has 33 operational urea manufacturing units with a total reassessed or installed capacity of 26.94 mt.

Maize craze

But just as India's domestic urea production rose, so did demand. In fact, rise in demand for urea has outstripped domestic urea production despite the new plants. As a result, despite looking to achieve self-sufficiency through NIP 2012, the country is still reaching for the same objective in 2026.

Some experts say that one reason for this state of affairs is a growing clamour among farmers to grow maize, which has become a prized crop due to its extensive use in ethanol. Maize, paddy and wheat are crops that consume the most urea. The maize craze, alongside an over-reliance on paddy and wheat means that consumption of this critical crop nutrient in India has not come down. India's per hectare consumption of urea, as per some estimates, has risen by around 20 per cent in the last 10 years to around 185-190 kgs.

Since the NIP 2012, India's urea consumption has risen from 29.56 mt in 2011-12 to almost 40 mt in 2025-26, a CAGR of around 2.32 per cent. Paddy acreage during this period has grown by a CAGR of 1.29 per cent while that of maize has risen by 3.58 per cent and wheat by 0.84 per cent. Clearly, the rise in maize cultivation could be one of the main reasons for the growth in urea demand.

In addition, pilferage and leakage have grown over the years. Though there is no official data, sources cite evidence to suggest that agricultural urea is being diverted for industrial use because of a massive difference in price.

Some industry players said that while technical or industrial grade urea is usually available in the market for around ₹85-90 per kg, agriculture grade urea is available at a highly subsidised rate of just ₹5 per kg. "This makes it a prime candidate for diversion and pilferage," a senior industry official said. Cutting down on this by raising the long-delayed retail price of urea would be one way to check diversion and pilferage.

Until recently, the landed price of imported urea was close to ₹3,000-4,000 per 45-kg bag. This came down to around ₹2,400 few days back but the same is available to Indian farmers at a heavily subsidised ₹265-270 per bag.

A government assessment shows that the biggest consumers of urea are in 163 out of India's 730 districts. A significant number of these districts, as per some reports, are in Punjab, Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh and regions bordering states West Bengal and Assam — a concentration attributed to perceived smuggling.

As in NIP-1, most of the plants in NIP-2 are proposed to be set up by cooperatives, the public sector, or state governments, with only limited private sector involvement. The reason is that with profits capped and return on investment (RoI) pre-decided, private participation will continue to be elusive despite attractive subsidy proposals.

From crisis to opportunity

"India's urea sector crisis presents a rare window of opportunity to undertake long-overdue structural reforms that can strengthen both fiscal sustainability and supply resilience," a recent policy brief by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (Icrier) said.

It said reforms should include gradual decontrol of urea through a farmer-centric Direct Benefit Transfer mechanism, rationalisation and expansion of the Nutrient-Based Subsidy framework, promotion of balanced and sulphur-based nutrient management, diversification of fertiliser import sources and feedstock, establishment of strategic fertiliser reserves, and accelerated investments in domestic production of green ammonia and other low-carbon fertiliser inputs.

More fundamentally, India's fertiliser policy must move beyond its traditional role as an agricultural support instrument, the brief said.

Weather tracking in safeguarding agriculture

DR PALLABI DAS, DR PALLAVI DEKA, PRANABESH BARMAN

Timely weather information can help Assam's farmers manage climate risks, improve productivity and strengthen agricultural resilience.

Agriculture is the backbone of Assam's rural economy, supporting the livelihood of nearly 70 percent of the State's population directly or indirectly. The fertile plains of the Brahmaputra and Barak valleys have traditionally made Assam suitable for cultivating paddy, tea, mustard, jute, pulses, sugarcane, fruits and vegetables. However, agriculture in the State is highly dependent on weather conditions, making farmers extremely vulnerable to climate variability and extreme weather events. In recent years, irregular rainfall, rising temperatures, floods, drought-like situations and storms have increasingly disrupted agricultural production across Assam. In this changing climate scenario, weather tracking has become an essential tool for ensuring agricultural sustainability and protecting farmers' livelihoods.

Assam experiences a humid subtropical climate with heavy monsoon rainfall. Traditionally, farmers followed predictable seasonal cycles for sowing and harvesting. But climate change has altered these patterns significantly. Scientific studies now indicate noticeable changes in rainfall distribution and temperature trends across the State. According to the India Meteorological Department, Northeast India has experienced irregular monsoon behaviour over the past decade, with both excessive rainfall events and long dry spells becoming more frequent.

During the 2025 southwest monsoon season, Assam and Meghalaya together recorded nearly 49 percent below-normal rainfall. Against the normal rainfall of about 1,762.2 mm, only around 906.4 mm of rainfall was received. Such a large rainfall deficit created drought-like conditions in several districts and severely affected agricultural activities. Farmers in districts such as Nalbari, Barpeta, Kamrup, Bongaigaon, Dhubri and Morigaon faced acute water shortages during the paddy transplantation period.

Reports from 2025 showed that nearly 27 districts of Assam experienced drought-like conditions due to deficient rainfall. Many farmers were unable to transplant Sali paddy seedlings on time because agricultural fields remained dry for prolonged periods. In rain-fed areas, delayed rainfall resulted in reduced germination and poor crop establishment.

Temperature rise is another growing concern for Assam's agriculture. A recent scientific study conducted in 2025 revealed that increasing temperatures and changing rainfall patterns are negatively affecting crop productivity in the State. The study estimated that for every 1°C rise in temperature, rice yield decreases by approximately 0.112 tonnes per hectare. Tea and mustard crops are also showing reduced productivity under changing climatic conditions. Since Assam is globally known for its tea industry, climate stress poses a serious economic challenge not only for farmers but also for the State's export economy.

In such a challenging environment, weather tracking and forecasting systems have become increasingly important for agricultural planning and risk reduction. Accurate weather forecasts help farmers make informed decisions regarding land preparation, sowing dates, irrigation scheduling, fertiliser application, pesticide spraying and harvesting. Timely weather information can significantly reduce crop damage and improve farm productivity.

Modern technology has improved farmers' access to weather information. Mobile phones, weather applications, television broadcasts, radio programmes and digital advisory services now provide real-time weather updates to farming communities. Institutions such as the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Assam Agricultural University (AAU) and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) regularly issue agrometeorological advisories for farmers based on local weather conditions.

However, challenges remain in ensuring the effective use of weather information in rural areas. Many farmers, especially in remote villages, lack awareness about interpreting weather forecasts and using digital advisory services. Limited internet connectivity and low technological literacy further restrict access to real-time weather information.

Weather tracking in Assam is now increasingly supported by digital technology and mobile-based advisory services. Several mobile applications launched by agricultural institutions and research organisations are helping farmers receive real-time weather forecasts, pest alerts, crop advisories and market information directly on their phones.

One important initiative is the 'Pathar Bazar' mobile application developed by KVKs under AAU. The app was launched in 2022 to support farmers across Assam with weather forecasts, crop production technologies, animal husbandry information, seed availability, market news and pest management services. The application was designed especially for rural farmers to improve decision-making through timely information.

Another notable development is the 'Sashya Rakshyak' app introduced by AAU. This bilingual mobile app, available in Assamese and English, helps farmers identify crop pests and diseases affecting nearly 36 agricultural and horticultural crops commonly grown in Assam.

In 2026, Assam University launched the 'Krishi Bikash-Barak Valley' mobile app for farmers of the Barak valley. The multilingual and voice-enabled app provides advanced weather forecasts, weather alerts, crop-specific farming guidance, soil health management information and pest control advisories. The app was specially developed to work even on low-cost smartphones and slower internet connections, making it accessible to rural farmers.

Apart from Assam-specific applications, farmers in the State are also increasingly using national weather advisory apps such as Meghdoot, developed jointly by the IMD, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and Indian Council of Agricultural Research. The Meghdoot app provides district-wise weather forecasts and agro-advisories in local languages.

The growing use of such mobile applications reflects a major shift towards digital agriculture in Assam. Weather tracking technologies are no longer limited to meteorological departments alone; they are gradually reaching farmers' hands through smartphones and rural extension networks. If effectively implemented and widely adopted, these digital tools can help farmers reduce crop losses, improve productivity and build resilience against climate change in the years ahead.

(Dr Das is an Assistant Professor, Dept of Extension Education, AAU; Dr Deka is a Subject Matter Specialist (Agri Economics), KVK Udalguri; and Pranabesh Barman is a Programme Assistant, KVK Udalguri)

Farmers encouraged to spray PPFM on crops to balance water scarcity

Pink Pigmented Facultative Methylotrophs is a beneficial bacteria which functions as a plant growth promoter and helps in short-term drought-mitigation for crops affected by water scarcity and heat stress, says Agriculture Department officials

S.Ganesan
TIRUCHI

With monsoon remaining scarce so far and the absence of flow in the Cauvery due to insufficient storage at the Mettur dam, Agriculture Department officials in Tiruchi district have started encouraging farmers to spray Pink Pigmented Facultative Methylotrophs (PPFM) to mitigate the drought-like condition.

PPFM is a beneficial bacteria which functions as a plant growth promoter and helps in short-term drought-mitigation for crops affected by water scarcity and heat stress, officials said.

A sorghum field at Karattampatti in Musiri block after being sprayed with PPFM. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Spraying of PPFM, promoted by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), was carried out about a decade ago in paddy in parts of the State during drought conditions. Though it was not used in a big way subsequently, officials say it can help under the current weak monsoon conditions attributed to El Nino effect.

PPFM should be used at the rate of one litre an acre and can be sprayed twice, once in 15 days, they added.

An officer of the department said that PPFM can be used for all crops and the department had been encouraging farmers to spray it on sorghum, groundnut, gingelly, and sugarcane crops in Musiri block in Tiruchi district in recent months and the spraying had shown encouraging results.

> Foliar spraying of PPFM should be done when the growth is good
>
> **R. SUGUMAR**
> Assistant Director of Agriculture, Musiri

"PPFM is a phyllosphere bacteria and helps the crop resist water stress for up to 10 days. Foliar spraying of PPFM should be done when the growth is good. We have used PPFM on summer crops such as sorghum, groundnut and gingerly and now in sugarcane in Musiri block. The spraying had given good visible results," said R.Sugumar, Assistant Director of Agriculture, Musiri.

The department, he said, planned to distribute the PPFM under the central subsidised schemes for demonstration plots for crops such as sorghum, groundnut, and castor in the district.

Farmers urged to adopt direct-seeded rice

OUR CORRESPONDENT

FATEHGARH SAHIB, AUGUST 1

To encourage the adoption of direct-seeded rice (DSR) and promote sustainable farming practices, the Agriculture Department organised an exposure visit for around 150 farmers to the fields of progressive cultivators at Reona Niwan village under the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) scheme.

Chief Agriculture Officer Dr Jagdev Singh said the initiative was aimed at conserving rapidly depleting groundwater, reducing environmental pollution associated with conventional paddy cultivation and motivating farmers to adopt direct-seeded paddy.

Farmers visit a field at Reona Niwan village.

During the visit, farmers interacted with progressive cultivators Phumman Singh and his brother Jagtar Singh, who have been practising direct-seeded paddy for the past three years. They have cultivated around 150 acres under the method this season and have also avoided burning paddy stubble for the past five to six years.

Sharing his experience, Phumman Singh said the DSR method had reduced fertiliser consumption, lowered pest infestation, cut irrigation water and labour costs and ultimately increased farm income. He also appreciated the Punjab Government for providing an incentive of Rs 1,500 per acre to farmers adopting the technique.

Deputy Project Director Dr Harmanjeet Singh and Dr Jatinder Singh advised farmers to avoid excessive use of chemical fertilisers, saying balanced application not only reduces cultivation costs but also helps maintain soil fertility and protect the environment.

Agriculture Department officials, including Dr Prabhunath, Pritpal Singh, Rajvir Singh, Gagandeep Singh and Varinder Singh, were also present.

सवाल जवाब

'यूरिया की कीमतें 500 डॉलर प्रति टन के आसपास रहेंगी'

पश्चिम एशिया में जारी संघर्ष से वैश्विक उर्वरक आपूर्ति श्रृंखला प्रभावित हुई है। ऐसे समय में भारत की अग्रणी कृषि समाधान कंपनी और फॉस्फेटिक उर्वरक निर्माता कोरोमंडल इंटरनेशनल लिमिटेड के प्रबंध निदेशक एवं मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी एस. शंकरसुब्रमण्यन ने भारतीय बाजार पर इसके असर और उर्वरक उद्योग के आउटलुक पर शाइन जेकब से बातचीत की। शंकरसुब्रमण्यन फर्टिलाइजर एसोसिएशन ऑफ इंडिया (एफएआई) के अध्यक्ष भी हैं। बातचीत के संपादित अंश:

खरीफ फसलों के लिए फिलहाल उर्वरकों की पर्याप्त उपलब्धता दिख रही है, लेकिन पश्चिम एशिया संकट के कारण रबी सीजन के लिए अनिश्चितता बनी हुई है। आप इस स्थिति और इसके असर को कैसे देखते हैं?

मॉनसून में अब कुछ सुधार हुआ है, जिससे उर्वरकों की बिक्री में भी बढ़ोतरी देखने को मिल रही है। रबी सीजन के लिए हमें अगले दो महीनों की स्थिति पर नजर रखनी होगी। यदि इस दौरान उत्पादन दर प्रभावित होती है तो विशेष रूप से फॉस्फेटिक उर्वरकों की उपलब्धता चुनौती बन सकती है। हालांकि, यूरिया के मामले में फिलहाल कोई बड़ी समस्या नहीं दिख रही।

पश्चिम एशिया युद्ध को लेकर आपकी सबसे बड़ी चिंता क्या है?

इस समय सबसे बड़ी चुनौती सल्फर की उपलब्धता और उसकी कीमत है। सल्फर, सल्फ्यूरिक एसिड बनाने का प्रमुख कच्चा माल है, जिसका उपयोग आगे फॉस्फेटिक एसिड और उर्वरकों के उत्पादन में किया जाता है। अन्य कच्चे माल उपलब्ध हैं, लेकिन उनकी कीमतों में भी उल्लेखनीय वृद्धि हुई है। उद्योग दो प्रमुख चुनौतियों का सामना कर रहा है। पहली, सल्फर, अमोनिया और फॉस्फोरिक एसिड जैसे कच्चे माल की कीमतों में तेज बढ़ोतरी। दूसरी, सब्सिडी व्यवस्था। यूरिया में सब्सिडी पूरी तरह लागत के अनुसार समायोजित होती है, जबकि फॉस्फेटिक उर्वरकों के लिए पोषक तत्व आधारित सब्सिडी (एनबीएस) लागू होती है। खरीफ सीजन के लिए एनबीएस दरें पश्चिम एशिया में संकट शुरू होने से पहले तय की गई थीं। हमने सरकार से अनुरोध किया है कि बढ़ी हुई लागत को देखते हुए इन दरों में संशोधन किया जाए। हमें उम्मीद है कि सरकार आवश्यक बदलाव करेगी। फिलहाल उद्योग को उपलब्धता, मार्जिन, कीमतों और मांग सभी मोर्चों पर चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ रहा है। बाजार की दृष्टि से भी यह देखना होगा कि आने वाले समय में उर्वरकों की मांग कैसी रहती है?

पश्चिम एशिया संकट के पीक पर यूरिया की कीमतें 950 डॉलर प्रति टन तक पहुंच गई थीं। साल के अंत तक आपका क्या अनुमान है?

अब यूरिया की कीमतें 450-500 डॉलर प्रति टन के दायरे में स्थिर होती दिख रही हैं। वैश्विक स्तर पर भी जिंसों के भाव में बड़ी तेजी की संभावना नहीं है। मुझे नहीं लगता कि यूरिया की कीमतों में उल्लेखनीय बढ़ोतरी होगी, बल्कि ये मौजूदा स्तर के आसपास बनी रह सकती हैं। हालांकि, फॉस्फेटिक उर्वरकों पर नजर रखना जरूरी है। डीएपी सबसे अधिक बिकने वाला फॉस्फेटिक उर्वरक है और इसकी कीमत फिलहाल 930-940 डॉलर प्रति टन के आसपास बनी हुई है। चीन द्वारा फॉस्फेटिक उर्वरकों के निर्यात पर प्रतिबंध जारी रखने से मांग और आपूर्ति के बीच असंतुलन बना हुआ है। कीमतों में बड़ी बढ़ोतरी की उम्मीद नहीं है, लेकिन इनके घटने की संभावना भी कम दिख रही है क्योंकि फिलहाल बाजार में मांग और आपूर्ति के बीच असंतुलन है।

वित्त वर्ष 2026-27 के बजट में उर्वरक सब्सिडी के लिए करीब 1.71 लाख करोड़ रुपये का प्रावधान किया गया था। रिपोर्टों के अनुसार, पहले तीन महीनों में ही 70,000 करोड़ रुपये से अधिक खर्च हो चुके हैं। पूरे वर्ष का आपका अनुमान क्या है?

इसका आकलन सरकार करेगी। लेकिन यूरिया की कीमतों में उल्लेखनीय गिरावट से नाइट्रोजन आधारित उर्वरकों पर सब्सिडी का बोझ काफी कम हुआ है। इसलिए कुल सब्सिडी व्यय बहुत अधिक बढ़ने की संभावना नहीं है। शुरुआत में जब यूरिया की कीमत 900 डॉलर प्रति टन के आसपास थी, तब अनुमान था कि उर्वरक सब्सिडी का बोझ काफी बढ़ जाएगा। लेकिन अब यूरिया की कीमतों में नरमी आने से यह दबाव काफी हद तक कम हो सकता है। वहीं फॉस्फेटिक उर्वरकों के मामले में भी इतनी बड़ी बढ़ोतरी की संभावना नहीं है। सरकार यदि खरीफ सीजन की सब्सिडी दरों में संशोधन करती है, तब भी सब्सिडी व्यय में बहुत अधिक वृद्धि होने की उम्मीद नहीं है।

यूरिया के लिए नई राष्ट्रीय निवेश नीति पर आपका क्या विचार है? माना जा रहा है कि 2012 की तुलना में निजी क्षेत्र की भागीदारी सीमित रह सकती है?

हम अभी इस नीति का मूल्यांकन कर रहे हैं, लेकिन यूरिया उत्पादन क्षमता बढ़ाकर उर्वरक सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करने की दिशा में सरकार का यह कदम अच्छा है। यह खाद्य सुरक्षा के लिहाज से भी बेहद महत्वपूर्ण है। सरकार ने इस संबंध में कुछ दिशा-निर्देश जारी किए हैं। भले ही ये 2012 की नीति जितने आकर्षक न हों, लेकिन लंबे समय में ये देश की पूरी यूरिया आवश्यकता को घरेलू उत्पादन से पूरा करने में मदद करेंगे। इससे आयात पर निर्भरता घटेगी। साथ ही उर्वरक सब्सिडी का कुल बोझ कम होगा और आपूर्ति सुरक्षा भी मजबूत होगी। यही सबसे महत्वपूर्ण पहलू है। देश में यूरिया की खपत को संतुलित करना भी बेहद जरूरी है। मौजूदा स्तर पर इसकी खपत लगातार बढ़ते रहना टिकाऊ नहीं है।

आपकी कंपनी नैनो उर्वरकों पर काफी जोर दे रही है। कुछ राज्य सरकारों द्वारा नैनो उत्पादों पर लगाए गए प्रतिबंधों को आप कैसे देखते हैं?

यह दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है कि जब भारत उर्वरकों की उपलब्धता जैसी चुनौती का सामना कर रहा है, तब कुछ राज्यों ने न केवल नैनो उत्पादों बल्कि सभी गैर सब्सिडी वाले उर्वरकों की बिक्री पर उर्वरक कंपनियों के लिए प्रतिबंध लगा दिया है। भारतीय किसानों को केवल नाइट्रोजन, फॉस्फोरस और पोटैशियम (एनपीके) ही नहीं, बल्कि सूक्ष्म पोषक तत्व, जल में घुलनशील उर्वरक और नैनो उत्पादों की भी आवश्यकता होती है। किसानों को विभिन्न विकल्प उपलब्ध होने चाहिए ताकि वे अपनी जरूरत के अनुसार चुनाव कर सकें। लेकिन उत्तर प्रदेश और महाराष्ट्र ने केवल उर्वरक कंपनियों पर यह प्रतिबंध लगाया है। यह दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है क्योंकि इन कंपनियों ने वर्षों से इस बाजार के विकास में निवेश किया है। गैर सब्सिडी वाले उर्वरकों का बाजार लगभग 1 अरब डॉलर का है। विशेष रूप से ऐसे समय में, जब मॉनसून की अनिश्चितता और जल संकट जैसी चुनौतियां हैं और किसान जल में घुलनशील उर्वरकों का अधिक उपयोग करते हैं। यदि कंपनियों को ये उत्पाद बेचने से रोका जाता है तो किसानों के पास एनपीके के अलावा अन्य गुणवत्तापूर्ण विकल्प नहीं बचते। इसके अलावा, इससे निम्न गुणवत्ता वाले उत्पादों को बाजार में जगह मिलती है। उर्वरक कंपनियों के उत्पादों की गुणवत्ता को लेकर कोई समस्या नहीं है। ऐसे प्रतिबंध किसानों को गुणवत्तापूर्ण उत्पादों से वंचित करते हैं।

Govt may adopt gene editing in the proposed seed Bill

Prabhudatta Mishra
New Delhi

India may formally adopt gene editing by mentioning it in the proposed seed Bill either through the main Bill or in the Rules if the government accepts experts' suggestions to avoid the experience with regard to genetically modified (GM) crops. GM technology has not been permitted for commercial cultivation in any food crop after being released in India in 2002 for cotton. The private sector is keen to get some legal backing for gene editing, citing that ICAR's two rice varieties are yet to be commercially released.

The government has finalised the Seed Bill, and its introduction in Parliament is awaiting political approval, sources said. The draft Seed Bill was published for public feedback in November 2025, and over 14,000 suggestions/views were received by the Agriculture Ministry within the 30-day deadline.

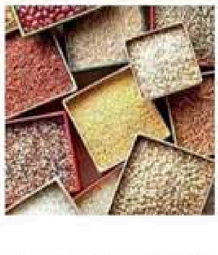
But sources said it is difficult for the government to accept the suggestion since the RSS-affiliated Bharatiya Kisan Sangh has objected to the word "transgenic" in the draft Bill, demanding its removal.

In its submission to the government, BKS said: "The term 'transgenic' shall be deleted from the document. Any form of transgenic or genetically modified seed shall not be taken into consideration."

SCALING UP MOOTED

Industry body Assocham, in partnership with Grant Thornton Bharat, released a report, titled *Seeds of Progress: Advancing Global Trade, Innovation and Sustainable Agriculture*, on Monday, suggesting that gene editing, among other measures, should be scaled up. Expressing concern over rising cotton imports, founder chairman of the Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS) and a former director-general of ICAR RS Paroda argued for adopting next-generation GM technologies.

"India's cotton sector has been steadily losing its global leadership over the last few years. Rising import dependence in a crop where India was the world's largest producer till 2014 and the second-largest exporter underscores the urgent need to embrace next-generation GM technologies through science-based regulatory reforms," Paroda said in a statement on July 31.



ICAR COMMITMENT

The Assocham report stayed away from mentioning GM technology and harped on gene editing. It said: "Increased investment in molecular breeding, biotechnology, digital breeding tools and climate-resilient genetics will be essential if India has to compete in an increasingly innovation-driven global seed economy."

On July 26, at a high-level round table on "Reforms in the Regulation and Approval of Genetically Modified (GM) and Genome-Edited (GE) Crop Plants", ICAR's Director General ML Jat reiterated the institution's unwavering commitment to advancing science-driven, evidence-based agricultural innovation

FSSAI penalises AWL Agri business over substandard fortified Sunflower oil

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi, 7 August

THE ACTION IS PART OF FSSAI'S BROADER ENFORCEMENT DRIVE TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH FOOD SAFETY AND MANDATORY FORTIFICATION STANDARDS ACROSS FOOD PRODUCTS.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has penalised edible oil company AWL Agri Business Ltd for manufacturing and marketing a fortified sunflower cooking oil that failed to meet prescribed food safety standards.

Ahmedabad-based AWL Agri Business sells edible oils under the Fortune brand. The regulatory action relates to Fortune 'Fryola' refined sunflower seed oil, a one-litre sample of which was collected from Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa in Goa.

According to FSSAI, the sample failed to comply with the requirements under the Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018.

The primary food laboratory found that the levels of Vitamins A and D in the fortified oil were below the stipulated limits. The product was consequently classified as substandard under Section 3(1)(zx) of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

The company subsequently challenged the initial laboratory findings, following which the sample was sent to a referral laboratory for further analysis.

The referral laboratory confirmed that the Vitamin D content in the product was significantly below the prescribed range, according to the food regulator.

Following the confirmation, the Central Licensing Authority sanctioned prosecution proceedings and an adjudication application was filed against AWL Agri Business.

The Adjudicating Officer in Goa subsequently passed the adjudication order and imposed a penalty on the company for manufacturing and marketing substandard fortified edible oil under the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act. FSSAI, however, did not disclose the amount of the penalty imposed on AWL Agri Business.

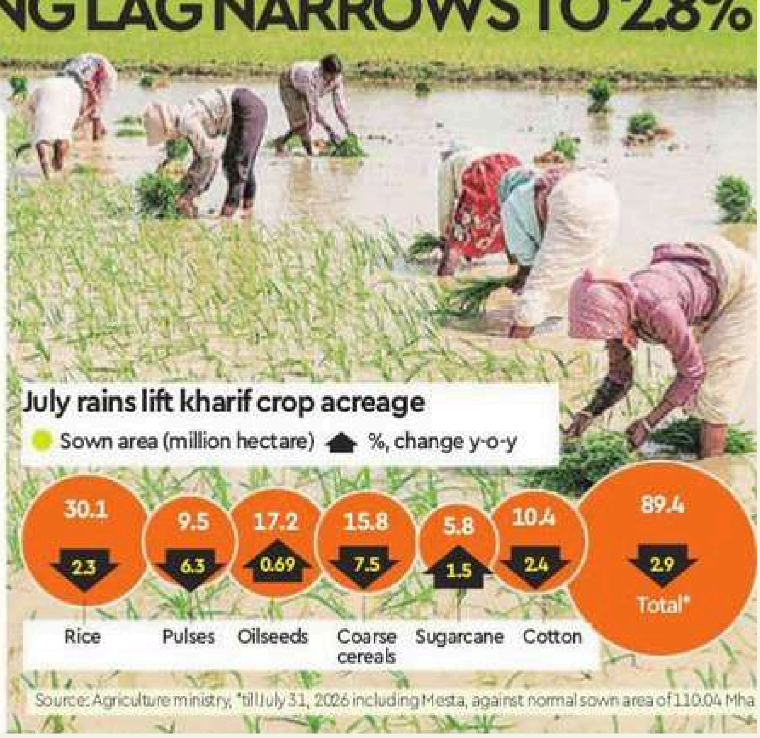
The latest action is part of a broader enforcement drive by FSSAI against food business operators and online platforms for alleged violations of food safety regulations.

In recent months, the regulator has intensified scrutiny across several categories, including packaged food products and beverages. Manufacturers of energy drinks and alcoholic beverages have also faced regulatory attention over compliance-related issues.

The action against AWL Agri Business highlights the regulator's focus on compliance with mandatory food fortification standards, particularly for products marketed as fortified edible oils.

KHARIF SOWING LAG NARROWS TO 2.8%

A 'normal' monsoon in July, following a severely deficient June, has boosted the sowing of kharif crops across the country. The total area under kharif crops, including paddy, pulses, oilseeds, sugarcane and coarse cereals, reached 89.42 million hectares (Mha) at the end of July, down just 2.8% from a year ago, reports **Sandip Das.** According to the agriculture ministry, the sown area has now crossed 81% of the normal kharif acreage of 110 Mha. Sowing is expected to continue till the end of August. Rice, the principal kharif crop, has been sown over 30.14 Mha, 2.24% lower than a year ago.



India, Egypt to boost trade and investments

New Delhi

COMMERCE and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said India and Egypt discussed measures to enhance two-way investment flows, strengthen bilateral economic cooperation and facilitate smoother trade in digitally delivered services during a meeting with Egypt's Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Mohamed Farid Saleh.

Sharing details of the meeting with Dr. Saleh, on social media platform X, Goyal said both sides discussed measures to enhance two-way investment flows and reinforce bilateral economic cooperation.

The talks also covered steps to facilitate smoother trade in digitally delivered services. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the BRICS India 2026 Trade and Industry Ministers' Meeting.

"Held a meeting with Dr. Mohamed Farid Saleh, Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade, Egypt, on the sidelines of the BRICS India 2026 Trade and Industry Ministers' Meeting," Goyal stated. "Discussed measures to enhance two way investment flows, reinforce bilateral economic cooperation, and facilitate smoother trade in digitally delivered services," he mentioned.

Meanwhile, earlier in the week, Goyal said that BRICS nations have a unique opportunity to strengthen manufacturing competitiveness, deepen technological collaboration, build resilient value chains and promote sustainable industrial growth.

DATANOMICS

India's trade surplus with the US falls after tariffs

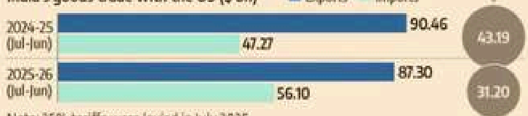
YASH KUMAR SINGHAL

US President Donald Trump levied 25 per cent tariff on India in July last year. Then, the tariff rate rose to 50 per cent in August to limit India's trade with Russia.

Following the levies, India's trade surplus with the US declined from \$43.19 billion in 2024-25 (July-June) to \$31.2 billion in 2025-26 (July-June) — a drop of 28 per cent year-on-year. The trade surplus narrowed because of higher imports of petroleum, aluminium and copper products, gold, silver, precious stones, and electronic goods. Simultaneously, India's outward shipments to the US fell during this period, with the largest declines seen in exports of gems and jewellery, drugs and pharmaceuticals, agricultural goods, and readymade garments. The US earned high Customs revenue during April 2025-March 2026. However, after the US started issuing refunds in the latter half of April 2026, net Customs revenue shrank that month and turned negative from May 2026.

The decline

India's goods trade with the US (\$ bn)



Note: 25% tariffs were levied in July 2025, which were increased further to 50% in August 2025

Source: Department of Commerce, CMIE, BS calculations

Gems exports fall, gold and silver imports rise

Goods contributing to dip in India's trade surplus

Product	Decline in exports (\$ bn)	Rate of decrease in exports (%)
Gems & jewellery	3.94	44.02
Drugs & pharmaceuticals	1.33	12.45
Agricultural goods	1.10	18.75
Readymade garments	1.00	18.18

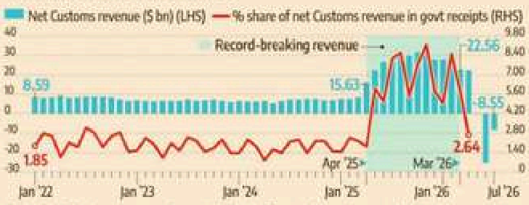
Product	Rise in imports (\$ bn)	Rate of increase in imports (%)
Electronic goods	3.58	56.76
Gold, silver, & precious stones	2.70	55.20
Metal products	1.14	59.18
Crude oil & petroleum products	1.13	9.44

Note: Figures have been calculated for the period July, 2025 -June, 2026 (Y-o-Y)

Source: Department of Commerce, CMIE, BS calculations

Net Customs revenue turns negative in 2026

Customs revenue earned by the US



Note: Net Customs revenue is post refunds. Share has not been calculated for negative values.

Source: US Treasury, BS calculations

Govt considering cap on Carbosulfan insecticide after plans to ban Paraquat

Prabhudatta Mishra
New Delhi

The government is considering restricting the use of Carbosulfan, a popular insecticide used on paddy, cotton and horticulture crops, with a final decision expected by the end of this month.

Coming on the heels of July's proposed ban on herbicide Paraquat, the move reflects growing official efforts to improve food safety and promote healthier agricultural practices.

Currently, FMC India, under its 'Marshal' brand, sells the insecticide, which contains 25 per cent (emulsifiable concentrate) Carbosulfan.

"Marshal insecticide, a trusted brand among farmers for decades, is known for its broad spectrum control on various chewing and sucking pests in cotton, paddy and vegetables. A different mode of action makes Marshal insecticide a good rotational partner, especially in vegetable spray programmes and manages issues around pest resistance," according to the FMC India website.

FMC Corporation in May signed a definitive agreement to sell its India commercial business to Crystal Crop Protection for $252 million, under which Crystal will acquire FMC India's commercial operations in the crop protection segment, including licences for the FMC brands sold in India.

Crystal will also receive a preferred supply agreement for certain FMC active ingredients and formulated products, along with preferred access to FMC's pipeline of crop protection products in India.

Sources said that the Agriculture Ministry, which has categorised Carbosulfan under "highly toxic", started acting on the proposal to put it under the restricted category only after it received the recommendation of the Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee (CIB&RC). The RC, in its meeting held on June 29, perused the report of the expert review committee on Paraquat Dichloride and Carbosulfan, and deliberated it extensively under Section 27(2) of the Insecticides Act, 1968.

"RC decided to communicate its recommendations separately to the Government of India for its consideration and taking a final appropriate view in the matter. The final decision taken by the Government of India shall be implemented by the RC accordingly," according to the minutes of the meeting.

PARAQUAT BAN

The government had on July 14 issued a draft order proposing a blanket ban on Paraquat Dichloride, citing its severe toxicity to humans and animals.

The draft notification seeks to halt the manufacture, import, sale and distribution of the widely used herbicide, giving stakeholders 30 days (by August 12) to submit feedback before a final ban is gazetted.

Industry sources said that once Carbosulfan is put under the restrictive category, there can be various types of restrictions to regulate its use by farmers, who currently freely use it.

Industry sources also said that unlike 'Paraquat', there is not much concern about Carbosulfan with regard to toxicity or other health risks.

However, sources said that the issue was referred to the expert panel by the RC as Carbosulfan had been added to the Rotterdam Convention, under which all signatories (countries) when importing the formulation have to notify it.

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