

ACFI NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2025

Sale of fake seeds, fertilisers need to be curbed

Sowing begins with good pre-monsoon showers in district

BAGALKOT, DHNS

This time, the district has received good pre-monsoon rains. Following this, sowing activities have gained momentum in various parts of the district.

Meteorologists have predicted that the monsoon rains will also be good. Hence, the farmers are taking up sowing, hoping to get good yield. There is a need to provide seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides properly.

Farmers often face difficulties due to poor quality seeds and fake fertilisers. Last year, the quality of tur sowing seeds was poor. As a result, the tur crop had flowered well at the beginning. However, later it did not give yield at the expect-



A farmer family engages in sowing near Pattadakal in Bagalkot district. DH PHOTO

ed-level. It caused loss to the farmers who had grown tur.

Four days ago, a lorry carrying fertiliser was seized. The lorry, which had come from Maharashtra, was carrying 240 bags of fertiliser. There was no label on the bags of fertiliser, which were meant to be sold under the name of organic. A case has been registered at Kaladagi police station on suspicion of fake fertiliser.

Seeds stocked

Greengram, tur, maize, bajra and sunflower sowing seeds have been stocked at various Raitha Samparka Kendras in the district. Farmers have already started sowing in many places due to good pre-monsoon rains.

The district has set a target of sowing 3.10 lakh hectares of land during the monsoon season. Sugarcane has already been planted

in 1.02 lakh hectares.

Maize, tur, greengram and bajra are the major crops. The target is to grow maize in 59,000 hectares, bajra in 22,000 hectares, tur in 51,000 hectares, sunflower in 24,000 hectares and greengram in 22,000 hectares.

Farmers are happy with the good pre-monsoon rains. The sowing activity has started in various parts of the district as rains receded for the past three days. Farmers in Hunagund, Ilkal, Badami and Bagalkot, who have relied heavily on the rains, are happy with the rains.

Agriculture Department Assistant Director Ashok Tirakappanvar said, supplying of sowing seeds has started at the Raitha Samparka Kendras. Farmers should take advantage of it.

Shivakumar Y, farmer of Gaddanakeri said: "It is essential to provide timely seeds, fertilisers and pesticides to us. We will grow crops with hard work".

WTO meet in Paris: India to raise issues on agri, fisheries, investment facilitation

NEW DELHI, June 1: India will flag its concerns on issues pertaining to agriculture, fisheries agreement, China-led proposal on investment facilitation and dysfunctional appellate body of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) during an informal meeting of about 25 trade ministers in Paris on June 3, an official said.

The mini-ministerial meeting will be held on the margins of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Ministerial Council Meeting in Paris.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will participate in this meeting. He is on a five-day visit to France and Italy from June 1.

The official said that India

will raise its concerns on all key issues of the WTO including agriculture (finding permanent solution to the public stock holding); fisheries agreement, investment facilitation proposal, reforms in the WTO and dysfunctional appellate body of the Geneva-based forum.

India is against the move led by countries such as China to push a proposal on investment facilitation at the WTO. A China-led group of 128 countries is pushing for the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) proposal.

Since 2009, WTO's dispute settlement mechanism is not functioning properly as the US has stalled appointments of members in the appellate body.

Meanwhile, a Commerce Ministry statement said that during his stay in Paris, Goyal will participate in the informal gathering of trade ministers from countries including the US, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Nigeria, Brazil, and Israel.

"At this crucial forum, he will engage with global counterparts on key multilateral trade issues and articulate the perspectives and priorities of India," the ministry said.

Goyal is also scheduled to hold bilateral meetings with French ministers, including Eric Lombard, Minister of Economy, and Laurent Saint-Martin, French Trade Minister.

The discussions will focus on strengthening the Indo-

French economic partnership and exploring new avenues for enhancing trade and investment cooperation.

He will also meet top leadership of major French companies such as Vicat, Total Energies, L'Oreal, Renault, Valeo, EDF and ATR, besides attending the India-France Business Round Table and the India-France CEO Forum.

As part of the visit, the minister will hold a series of high-level bilateral meetings with key international partners. These include the UK's Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Jonathan Reynolds; Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong; and Saudi Arabia's Minister of Commerce, Ma-

jid bin Abdullah Al-Kasabi.

Goyal will also engage with Israel's Minister for Trade and Investment Nir Barkat; Nigeria's Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment Jumoke Oduwole OON; Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security Marcos Sefcovic; and Brazil's Foreign Minister Mauro Luis Lecker Vieira.

"These dialogues are aimed at advancing strategic economic cooperation and fostering mutually beneficial partnerships across regions. They will also provide significant impetus to India-EU FTA (free trade agreement) negotiations," it said.

India and the EU are looking at concluding an early harvest trade agreement by July. — PTI

Seethakka warns traders against selling fake fertilisers

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL

Panchayati Raj Minister Danasari Anasuya Seethakka participated in the undivided Adilabad district-level review meeting held at the Collectorate here on Saturday.

The meeting was attended by the Collectors and officials from the erstwhile Adilabad district, MLC Dande Vittal, Teacher MLC Malk Komurayya, MLAs Kokkiralra Premsagar Rao, Gaddam Vinod, and Ramarao Patel, GCC Chairman Kotnak Tirupati, and ITDA PO Khushboo Gupta.

During the review meeting, topics such as paddy procurement, Indiramma housing, Bhoo Bharati, and preparedness for the rainy season crops were discussed.



Panchayati Raj Minister Danasari Anasuya Seethakka at a review meeting in Adilabad on Saturday

Speaking at the event, Seethakka said, "The credit for solving farmers' land issues through the Bhu Bharati initiative goes to the Congress government." The previous gov-

ernment failed to resolve the land issue and it turned farmers into labourers, she alleged.

She requested the allocation of 5,000 Indiramma houses to the Utnoor ITDA in tribal

areas.

She also warned that strict action would be taken against those involved in the sale of fake seeds or adulterated fertilisers.

India-Oman free trade pact soon

Talks for free trade pact with Oman started in Nov 2023

PARIS

COMMERCE and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has indicated that India is likely to sign a free trade agreement (FTA) with Oman soon, as the talks between the two countries are making headway.

"I think you will see some good news very soon on the Oman FTA," the minister told journalists here.

The minister is on an official trip to France with the aim of boosting trade and investments and will also at-



tend a ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on Tuesday.

The talks for the free trade pact with Oman started in November 2023, and Goyal visited the Gulf country from January 27 to January 28.

During the visit, Goyal co-chaired the 11th Session of the India-Oman Joint Com-

mission Meeting. Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion of the Sultanate of Oman. The meeting saw productive discussions on enhancing bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, technology, food security, renewable energy and other key areas. The two Ministers exchanged views on a bilateral India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which is at advanced stages of negotiations.

Centre mulls new, stricter law to tackle fake fertiliser

Fake products cut over 10 million tonnes of potential agricultural output in India, a study by FICCI reveals

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NEW DELHI: The Centre is preparing to introduce a stricter law to tackle the issue of fake fertilisers and spurious agricultural inputs—a problem that, according to a recent study, accounts for 40% of total sales by value and causes economic losses to farmers by reducing overall output, HT has learnt.

The country already has provisions that ban and criminalise sale of counterfeit pesticides and fertilisers, but seizures and crackdowns are not commonplace. The new law will have harsher punishment and target supply chains, an official said.

Agriculture minister Shivraj



The sale of substandard, fake or adulterated fertilisers is currently punishable under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. AFP FILE

Singh Chouhan had recently flagged the issue, urging farmers not to overuse agricultural chemicals and limit their use to prescribed limits, apart from warning marketeers of fake fertilisers of stern action.

Under current provisions, the federal fertiliser control order 1985 (clause 19) lays down technical specifications for each type

of fertiliser approved for farm-use sale, making illegal the marketing of agrochemicals not meeting these standards.

However, sale of substandard, fake or adulterated fertilisers is currently punishable under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, a law that is meant to regulate and maintain supply of goods, and often used to crack down on

hoarding and tame inflation.

"The government wants to bring a strict law that is specifically meant to penalise sale of illegal and fake fertilisers and farm chemicals," the official said.

Fake products cut over 10 million tonnes of potential agricultural output in the world's most populous country, according to a 2015 study by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce (FICCI). The value of illegal pesticides, for instance, has been expanding by nearly 20% a year, according to the study's findings.

Farmers often complain of lack of accountability for the spurious sales. In 2023, the ministry of chemicals and fertilisers, while uncovering the diversion of subsidised urea, had seized 70,000 bags of potentially counterfeit products. Counterfeiters manage to penetrate rural markets by copying packaging and labelling of genuine brands, a second official said.

On May 30, the Rajasthan government sealed 34 factories and lodged 12 first information reports on fake fertiliser sales.

AFTER US CALL TO DOUBLE DUTY ON STEEL, ALUMINIUM

‘India, US to Resolve All Issues Bilaterally’

Negotiations on proposed India-Oman FTA are progressing and good news likely to come soon, says Goyal

Kirtika Suneja

Paris: India and the US will continue to work together to resolve all issues bilaterally including America's decision to double the tariffs on steel and aluminium to 50%, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said.

"Let us wait and watch...both the US and India share good relations and we will continue to work together to resolve all these issues bilaterally," he said.

On May 30, US President Donald Trump announced doubling of the existing 25% tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from June 4.

India exported approximately \$6.2 billion worth of steel and finished steel products to the US in FY25 including a wide range of engineered and fabricated steel components and about \$0.86 billion of aluminium and its products. The US is among the top destinations for Indian steel makers, who have been gradually increasing market share through high-quality production and competitive pricing.

On March 8, 2018, the US promulgated safeguard measures on certain



steel and aluminium articles by imposing 25% and 10% ad valorem tariffs respectively on such products with effect from March 23, 2018. On February 10, 2025, it revised the safeguard measures on imports of steel and aluminium articles, effective March 12. New Delhi said US failed to notify WTO Committee on Safeguards of its decision to apply safeguard measures and as an affected member with significant export interest, it has requested consultations with Washington and proposed retaliation as well.

India proposed to impose retaliatory duties on 29 American products

including apples, almonds, pears, anti-freezing preparations, boric acid and certain products made of iron and steel under the WTO to counter the American tariffs on steel and aluminium.

BTA PUSH

Goyal also said that the two sides desire to give preferential market access to each other's businesses and that the teams of both the countries are working together on the proposed bilateral trade agreement.

"Both countries are committed to work together; both countries desire to give preferential access to each other's businesses and we are working towards the bilateral trade agreement," Goyal said.

The two aim to negotiate the first tranche of a mutually beneficial, multi-sector BTA by fall this year and more than double bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030 from the current level of \$191 billion.

A team of US officials is visiting India this week for discussions on the proposed interim trade agreement. The two sides are likely to agree on an interim deal by the end of June, with New Delhi pushing for full exemption from the 26% reci-

L'Oréal to More than Double India Biz

Paris: L'Oréal CEO Nicolas Hieronimus Monday said his company plans to more-than-double its business in India over the next few years besides expanding its factories as the country was a key strategic market. "India is a very strategic market for L'Oréal. We intend to more-than-double our business in the next couple of years, expand our factories which are today manufacturing 95% of what we sell in India and also exporting to rest of the region," he said.

—Kirtika Suneja

TotalEnergies to Sell More US LNG to India

Paris: France's TotalEnergies plans to sell more LNG to India, in particular, from the US, and continues to support the expansion of Adani Green, its CEO Patrick Pouyanné said. "We are the largest US LNG energy exporter; so we can bring more. We have also have a big venture in Mozambique with Indian companies. We will intend to restart very soon to provide energy to India. So that's also a plan," Pouyanné said after meeting minister Piyush Goyal in Paris.

—Kirtika Suneja

procal tariff on domestic goods.

OMAN FTA

Goyal said negotiations between India and Oman for the proposed free trade agreement are progressing and some "good news"

may come "very soon" on that. "I think you will see some good news very soon on the Oman FTA," he said.

(The correspondent is in Paris at the invitation of the commerce and industry ministry)

Sailesh Mehta elected as new FAI chairman

DEEPAK FERTILIZERS AND Petrochemicals MD Sailesh C Mehta has been elected as the new chairman of the Fertiliser Association of India (FAI). Earlier, N Suresh Krishnan, MD of Paradeep Phosphates, was the chairman of the fertiliser body.

Deforestation rules: EU sees India as 'low-risk'

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Paris: In a relief for exporters, India has been labelled "low-risk" under the European Union's Deforestation Regulations. For exporters, this translates into a simplified due diligence process — basic information gathering, but there is no need for exhaustive risk assessments or mitigation plans.

The regulations require companies to ensure that products exported to EU have been grown on land, which has not been deforested after Dec 2020. It is seen to

RELIEF FOR EXPORTERS

➤ Rules require companies to ensure that products exported to EU are grown on land that has not been deforested after Dec 2020

➤ Non-compliance entails a fine of up to 4% of a company's annual turnover

➤ Benchmarking will come up for review next year



be of special significance for coffee, cocoa, soya, rubber

and wood products.

While this comes as a major relief, India has been seeking relaxations, arguing that it puts an unnecessary burden on exporters, especially the smaller ones.

Govt sources have argued that this is a non-trade issue that is being thrust upon developing and poor countries.

It is, in fact, one of the issues that is also being discussed as part of the free trade negotiations on which India has sought a review, apart from the carbon border adjustment mechanism.

Spurious seeds flood market ahead of Kharif season; crackdown across state

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Hyderabad: As the sowing season for the Vanakalam (Kharif) crop begins this week, fraudsters are attempting to flood the market with spurious seeds, especially cotton, despite repeated warnings from officials and police. In the last couple of days, officials launched crackdown on spurious seed racket and arrested several people.

On June 1, based on a tip-off that spurious seeds were being stored at a house in Hanumal Palli village in Dhanwada mandal, the Narayanpet district police conducted a raid and seized 100kg of spurious cotton seeds. The

RYTHU PANEL WARNS SEED FIRMS

● Telangana Rythu Commission expressed displeasure at a seed company

● Firm failed to compensate farmers who suffered losses due to supply of spurious seeds



● Commission warned multinational firms against exploiting farmers

● More than 3,000 acres in Mulugu district affected

● District collector met with panel, provided update on situation

Marikalpolice registered cases against two people, G Srinivasulu and D Venkataiah, in connection with the case.

On the same day, Adilabad police arrested five persons in three separate cases for selling spurious seeds. According to Adilabad district

SP Ahil Mahajan, 78 fake seed packets and 10kg of loose seeds were seized from the accused. He urged farmers to report any information regarding counterfeit seeds to the police at 8712659965.

Earlier, on May 30, officials and police in Khammam

arrested nine persons in three separate cases and seized 560kg of fake seeds worth ₹14 lakh. Khammam police commissioner Sunil Dutt said agents of fake seed manufacturers lure farmers by promising to sell seeds at a lower price, but instead supply fake seeds.

Meanwhile, officials in Nagarkurnool said that buying BT-3 fake seeds could damage the agricultural ecosystem and environment, and may also cause skin problems. They advised farmers to purchase only govt-approved BT-2 cotton seeds from licensed dealers.

Officials warned that those selling fake seeds could face up to 10 years in jail.

After fertiliser, min Meena cracks down on fake seeds

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

TOI

Jaipur: Agriculture minister Kirori Lal Meena along with a team of department officials Tuesday raided 27 premises of seed manufacturing units and warehouses in Sriganganagar. During raid, substandard seeds were found, leading to sealing of 8 units.

A TOI report published on June 1 highlighted adverse impact of such seeds on crop yields.

Raids were conducted at seed factories and warehouses, including Shankar Seeds, Shakti Seeds and Harvester Food.

Meena said, "We found expired packets of seeds that were repackaged and also sprayed with paint. I am not going to sit idle and will continue crackdown on those who are cheating the farmers."

The operation was kept confidential and the minister personally supervised proceedings.



Agriculture minister Kirori Lal Meena during raid at warehouse in Sriganganagar Tuesday

"We are committed to a zero-tolerance policy against those involved in the sale of fake seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides. Anyone trying to profit from the hard work of our farmers will face legal action. Let me make it very clear it could have been in practice in the past, but I am not going to let it continue. Selling substandard seeds or fertilisers not only affect crop yields but also jeopardises the livelihoods of countless farmers in the state," the minister added.

CCPL launches rice herbicide, cotton insecticide

Our Bureau
Chennai

Crystal Crop Protection Ltd (CCPL) announced the launch of a herbicide and insecticide, both major research-driven products.

CCPL launched RICEACT, a solution tailored specifically for rice cultivation, and JIVORA, a next-generation insecticide, designed to address the rising challenges of sucking pests in cotton, said a statement from the company. The company will introduce RICEACT and JIVORA across key markets in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Haryana and West Bengal.

WEED MORTALITY

RICEACT is an early post-emergence herbicide that brings together two highly effective active ingredients — “triafalone” (20 per cent) and “ethoxysulfuron” (10 per cent) — offering a ro-



bust dual mode of action, providing effective control on various weeds. It works efficiently across transplanted and wet direct-seeded paddy crops, managing a broad spectrum of grasses, sedges and broadleaf weeds that are known to significantly affect paddy yield and profitability.

The company said RICEACT ensures early weed control and provides season-long residual control. While Triafalone acts through the roots and leaves of the weed and inhibits critical enzyme activity, Together, they effectively block the Acetolactate Synthase (ALS) enzyme, resulting in complete weed

mortality with superior crop safety.

This product has been designed to be applied ideally when weeds are in the “1-3 leaf stage”. With a recommended dose of 90 g per acre, RICEACT provides a unified solution for full-season weed management in rice, reducing labour dependency. The rice pesticide will likely be used on about 3 lakh hectares of paddy, the company claimed.

PRODUCTS' TIMING

JIVORA is a combination of two proficient active ingredients, offering protection against Whiteflies, Jassids and Aphids in cotton. Its residual control provides a robust defence during critical crop stages, specifically during the 2nd and 3rd spray.

JIVORA is the result of “deep market research” and field trials across key cotton-growing regions in the country. It could benefit thousands of cotton farmers, the statement said, adding that

at least 4.5-5 lakh farmers could take to the insecticide this season.

Ankur Aggarwal, Managing Director of CCPL, said, “... Both JIVORA and RICEACT will be available across Crystal's authorised distribution network in 50 g, 100 g, 250 g, 500 g and 1-kg pack sizes and 45 g, 60 g and 90 g pack sizes, respectively.”

Sohit Satyawali, Vice-President – Sales and Marketing of CCPL, said, “As always, our aim remains to support farmers in ensuring maximum crop protection and profitability.”

CCPL's introduction of these two major products comes at a time when India's crop-protection market is projected to grow from \$2.59 billion in 2025 to \$3.21 billion by 2030 at a CAGR of 4.35 per cent.

With the launch of these two products, Crystal Crop Protection expects to increase its herbicide portfolio by 8 per cent and its insecticide portfolio by 7 per cent.

● SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN, UNION AGRICULTURE MINISTER

‘Export-import policy must protect farmer interests’

Union agriculture minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is currently visiting states as part of the *Visit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan*, which aims to familiarise 15 million farmers with practices specific to agro-climatic zones. Chouhan speaks to Sandip Das on the sidelines of an event in Sehore, Madhya Pradesh, on a range of issues impacting the agriculture sector. Excerpts:

It has been a year since you took charge. What are the challenges the agriculture sector is facing?

We need to ensure that farmers with small land holdings derive profit from agricultural activities. We are focusing on producing better seeds through usage of new technologies — the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) recently released two genome-edited rice varieties. Crop diver-

sification is also a challenge. We need to produce more oilseeds and pulses — we are now producing more rice than required. The soybean yield has to be increased. Scientists should come to the fields and do research based on the needs of the farmer.

Another focus area is to align the use of fertilisers with soil quality.

We need to create soil health cards for each farmer and need to educate them about the balanced use of fertilisers. After promotion of drip irrigation and mechanisation, we need to work on curbing excessive usage of pesticides.

How do you intend to deal with issues associated with climate change?

Extreme weather events have really impacted the agricultural output. Farmers have informed us that we need to develop vari-

eties of mangoes that can be grown in winter months to avoid extreme weather conditions. We should work on increasing the shelf-life of tomato varieties. For instance, we need to develop varieties which can be processed for products like puree and ketchup. Food processing has to get more attention.

The procurement mechanism for oilseeds and pulses is still not robust.

This year, we have promised 100% procurement of pulses varieties such as tur, urad and masoor and oilseeds like soybean, groundnut and

mustard under the price support scheme. We have made record purchases of these commodities this season, but states have to step in to procure pulses and oilseeds for boosting the output. Compare the current procurement levels with those in 2014 and there is a huge difference.

The government recently allowed yellow peas import at zero duty till FY 26 and reduction in import duties on crude edible oil.

We need to create a balance between

providing remunerative prices to farmers and keeping consumer prices stable. As we are not self-sufficient in pulses and oilseeds, we have to import.

Earlier, there was no import duty on edible oil, now it is 20%. Because of inflation in edible oils as suggested by the department of consumer affairs, duties on cooking oils were recently reduced. Import and export policy should be such that it takes care of the farmers' interest.

What are the measures you intend to take to deal with selling of fake pesticides and seeds?

We are discussing it. At present, there are cases of inferior quality of pesticides and seeds being sold to farmers. Current legal provisions against such acts are not stringent. Amendment to the Seeds Act is also

being discussed.

What are the prospects of agricultural growth for 2025-26?

Agriculture growth depends on the monsoon rains. If everything works according to the plan, we will try to maintain the 3-5% growth achieved over the last few years. We expect to achieve a 3-3.5% growth in 2025-26. We are trying to strengthen the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana as there are reports that claim assessments are not being carried out properly. Crop cutting experiments to ascertain yield are also not perfect. Through usage of satellite remote sensing, we will assess crop losses and work towards faster settlement of claims by insurers. Currently, if claim settlements are not done in a timely manner, there is a provision of slapping a 12% penalty on crop insurance firms.



WE ARE GOING TO STRENGTHEN THE PRADHAN MANTRI FASAL BIMA YOJANA AS THERE ARE REPORTS THAT CLAIM ASSESSMENTS ARE NOT BEING CARRIED OUT PROPERLY

Agri sector transformed by five-fold budget boost: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's agricultural sector has undergone a "profound transformation" over the past 11 years through various government schemes and increased budgetary allocations, empowering farmers to lead the nation from food security to global food leadership, the government said on Saturday.

The transformation has focused on inclusivity by supporting small farmers, women-led groups and allied sectors while positioning India as a global agricultural leader,

according to an official statement.

"Over the past eleven years, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India's agricultural sector has undergone a profound transformation, rooted in the philosophy of Beej Se Bazaar Tak (seed to market)," the government said.

Budget estimates for the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare have risen from Rs 27,663 crore in 2013-14 to Rs 1,37,664.35 crore in 2024-25, an increase of nearly five times, it added. India's foodgrain produc-



tion grew from 265.05 million tonnes in 2014-15 to an estimated 347.44 million tonnes in 2024-25, showing strong growth in agricultural out-

put.

The government has also increased minimum support prices (MSP) significantly. MSP for wheat rose from Rs

1,400 per quintal in 2013-14 to Rs 2,425 per quintal in 2024-25, while paddy prices increased from Rs 1,310 per quintal in 2013-14 to Rs 2,369 per quintal in 2025-26.

Under the PM-KISAN scheme launched in February 2019, the government has disbursed Rs 3.7 lakh crore to more than 110 million farmers. The Kisan Credit Card scheme has provided about Rs 10 lakh crore in credit to 7.71 crore farmers.

Procurement data shows improvement across crops. Kharif crop procurement totalled 787.1 million tonnes

between FY15 and FY25 compared to 467.9 million tonnes in the previous decade from 2004-05 to 2013-14.

Pulses procurement at MSP increased significantly from 1,52,000 tonnes during 2009-2014 to 8.3 million tonnes during 2020-2025, while oilseeds procurement at MSP increased manifold over the past 11 years. The government's approach has focused on modern irrigation, credit access, digital marketplaces and agri-tech innovations while reviving traditional practices like millet cultivation and natural farming.

Licences of 24 fertilizer dealers suspended after statewide raids

Gandhinagar: The state agriculture department conducted surprise raids at dealerships selling chemical fertilizers on Saturday to prevent misuse. In the raids conducted across 16 districts, the licences of 24 dealers were suspended, the govt said on Sunday.

An official statement mentioned that the inspections were conducted by 32 teams of the agriculture

department. The inspections involved checking the physical stock of fertilisers, the stock in POS machines and verifying records of govt-approved dealers of chemical fertilizers.

"In total, 57 dealers across 16 districts were inspected, and show-cause notices were issued to dealers for various reasons. The licences of 24 dealers

were suspended due to irregularities found in the fertilizer stocks at 24 locations," the statement said. An estimated 1,090.64 metric tonnes of fertilizers worth 1.78 crore were prevented from being sold, and further legal action was taken. During the inspection, sale of fertilizer stocks was verified with 101 farmers," the statement added. TNN

India Slaps Anti-dumping Duty on Insoluble Sulphur from China, Japan

Anti-dumping duties also imposed on vit-A palmitate imports from China, EU & Switzerland

Our Bureau

New Delhi: India has imposed anti-dumping duty on imports of insoluble sulphur from China and Japan.

It also imposed anti-dumping duty on imports of vitamin-A palmitate from China, the European Union and Switzerland.

The move was initiated following a recommendation by the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) to safeguard the domestic industry from the unfairly priced

The duty on vitamin A palmitate will range from \$0.87 to \$20.87 per kg, while that on insoluble sulphur will be from \$259 to \$358 per metric tonne.



ISTOCK

imports.

These duties will be applicable with immediate effect and will re-

main in force for five years, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs said in two separate

notifications issued late Friday.

In its investigation in March, the DGTR found that both substances were being exported to India at unfairly low prices, resulting in dumping, harming the local producers.

Insoluble sulphur is used primarily by tyre manufacturers to improve rubber vulcanisation, while vitamin-A palmitate is used in fortified foods and the pharma industry.

The duty on vitamin A palmitate will range from \$0.87 to \$20.87 per kg, while that on insoluble sulphur will be from \$259 to \$358 per metric tonne.

High Input Costs Cloud Outlook for Fertiliser, Chemical Cos

Sustaining gains could be a challenge due to poor export demand; govt subsidy expected to cover costs only partially

Snehal Mergu

ET Intelligence Group: The ET Fertiliser and ET Chemical indices have each gained nearly 19% over the past three months, buoyed by recovery in the broader market. However, retaining these gains will be challenging given the input cost inflation and slow export demand amid tariff-related measures. Rising prices of raw materials such as rock phosphate and sulphur have affected margins. Low inventory levels of key fertilisers including di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) may offer support given the potential restocking-led demand. For the chemical sector, moderating exports and falling prices remain a concern.

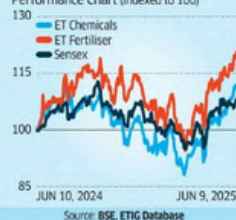
In April 2025, the government

increased subsidies on phosphates and sulphur by 45% and 48% to make fertilisers affordable to farmers. This, however, is likely to cover higher input costs only partially. According to Elara Capital, soaring prices of raw materials such as rock phosphate and sulphur—key inputs for phosphoric acid, which finds use in fertilisers and soil management—are expected to narrow margin spreads by up to 30% for fertiliser makers even after taking the government subsidies into account. On the positive side, Elara pointed out that inventory levels of key fertilisers like DAP and urea are at its second lowest level in the past six years, pointing to potential restocking-led demand.

Price trends remain mixed across the chemicals basket. According to Kotak Securities, refrigerant prices

Making Progress

Performance Chart (Indexed to 100)



Source: BSE, ETIG Database

remain firm, but most petrochemical and battery materials are under pressure. Soda ash shows no signs of recovery, and while phenol prices have rebounded modestly, they still remain below historical averages.

India's organic and inorganic chemical exports fell 21% month-on-month and 9% year-on-year in April 2025. Globally, the demand outlook remains weak. Kotak highlights a sharp fall in India's chemical exports in April and soft crop prices across major commodities like corn, soybean, and wheat. International agrochemical companies have guided for flat growth in CY25, pointing to continued headwinds. "There's no broad-based recovery in prices yet," Kotak Securities added, citing continued oversupply from China and weak global pricing across chemical categories.

Motilal Oswal Financial Services considers Atul and Vinati Organics as top picks. "Atul's end-user demand improved in FY25 with key projects like the 50 KTPA liquid epoxy resin plant

commissioned," the brokerage mentioned in a report, assigning a target price of ₹8,450.

Vinati Organics has commissioned plants for antioxidants (AO) and other products. Its revenue from AOs grew to ₹220 crore in FY25 from ₹130 crore in FY24, making it the largest double-integrated AO manufacturer in India. Motilal Oswal has assigned a target price of ₹2,195, reflecting a healthy long-term growth outlook despite supply risks from China. The stocks of Atul and Vinati were last traded at ₹7,457.6 and ₹1,875 on Monday on the BSE.

In coming quarters, sector performance will hinge on input cost trends, crop price recovery, and rebound in export markets. Analysts maintain a cautious stance, projecting margin stress despite supportive policy measures.

Bayer launches BICOTA to help paddy farmers tackle stem borers

Our Bureau

Bengaluru

Bayer has announced the launch of BICOTA, a new product designed to help rice farmers manage stem borer pests effectively.

BICOTA, which combines Bayer's exclusive innovation to provide strong protection against these damaging pests, will be available across key rice-growing States, including Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana starting June 2025, the company said in a statement.

ROOT DEVELOPMENT

Stem borers can cause significant damage to rice crops, leading to reduced yields. BICOTA works quickly to stop the feeding of these pests and provides longer-lasting protection.



STRONG PROTECTION. BICOTA will be available across key rice-growing States, including Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh, starting June 2025

Additionally, it promotes better root and tiller development, helping to enhance overall crop health and address the key challenge of controlling stem borer infestation amid changing weather conditions while ensuring higher yields.

Mohan Babu, Chief Operating Officer-India, Crop Science Division, Bayer, said, "With BICOTA, we not only want paddy farmers to have solutions that will protect

their crop but also save them time and labour costs and help improve their yields and income."

BICOTA is safe to use and safe for beneficial insects, making it an ideal choice for farmers and also fits well in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices. Its granular formulation allows for convenient application, making it easy for farmers to cover their fields quickly, the company added.

Fake DAP menace causes worry among farmers

GADAG, DHNS

Following the discovery of fake DAP in Gadag and Bagalkot districts, the enforcement officers of the Agriculture Department have intensified inspections in all districts.

There is a shortage of DAP in the market and to take advantage of this, fraudsters are cheating farmers by coloring the soil. When the seized DAP was subjected to laboratory analysis, it was confirmed to be fake, said Agriculture Department officials.

For the first time this year, fake DAP has been found in Ron and Shirahatti taluks in Gadag district. 475 bags of fake DAP were found in Madalgeri in Ron taluk and 45

bags in Kadakol village in Shirahatti taluk. Out of these, the authorities had sent the DAP sample found in Madalgeri to the laboratory. The report confirmed that it was fake. The DAP sample seized in Kadakol has also been sent to the laboratory and the report is yet to come. The sample of the DAP bag found in both places is the same, said the officials.

Agriculture Department Joint Director G H Taramani said: "Fake DAP, which was being sold in a yellow bag with the name of Indo Israel Group of Companies printed in large letters, has been seized. The genuine DAP bag is printed with 'Diammonium phosphate'. The amount of nutrients in it is also mentioned. However, the seized

fake DAP bag has 'Direct Available Phosphorus' printed on it. When it was sent to the laboratory and analysed, it was found to contain 0% N and 9% P. This is nothing but soil. Genuine DAP contains 18% nitrogen and 46% phosphorus".

Enforcement wing officials said, the Gujarat company address printed on the bag has been informed about the seizure of fake DAP. If the report of another company is also confirmed to be fake, a notice would be issued to the company and the distributor. There is also a possibility that fraudsters may cheat using the company name. Since fake DAP was found in Gadag and Bagalkot districts, verification has been intensified in other districts as well.



Officials from the Enforcement Wing of the Agriculture Department seize fake DAP in Madalageri village of Ron taluk, Gadag district. DH PHOTO

'Farmers expressed concern about substandard pesticides, seeds, called for strict law to curb sale'

UNION AGRICULTURE Minister **SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN** has been traveling to states as part of his ministry's Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan (VBSA) initiative, running from May 29 to June 12. During the campaign, 2,000 teams comprising scientists, experts, officials and progressive farmers have been traveling across over 700 districts. During his visit to Telangana, Chouhan spoke to **HARIKISHAN SHARMA**. Excerpts:

You have been meeting officers and scientists during the past year and now, during the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan. According to them, what is the biggest problem Indian agriculture is facing today?

It is not that I will know about the problems only if someone tells me. I live farming. But interactions reveal different aspects of the problems. One thing is for sure that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, since he took charge in 2014, production of food grains has increased by more than 40%. This time, too, we have achieved all-

time high production. We are doing very well in production, using new technology, and our scientists are also carrying out research. Things are going on but for a developed India, which is the resolve of the Prime Minister, I believe that developed agriculture and prosperous farmers are key. For this, it is necessary that all the forces working in agriculture move in one direction—be it the agriculture teams of the Union and state governments, the research scientists, the farmers, agricultural universities and progressive farmers. Right now I see a lack of this. Work is going on in different directions. That is why we came up with One Nation, One Agriculture, One Team. That team is now among farmers in the fields and holding discussions.

Some time back, a committee constituted by your ministry had suggested a GST Council-like body for agriculture. Do you think there is a need for such a body, especially in view of your slogan of One Nation, One Agriculture, One Team?

I have held three meetings with agriculture ministers of



THE EXPRESS
INTERVIEW
WITH
SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN
UNION AGRICULTURE MINISTER

states in one year. One virtual, twice in-person. Before every crop season, we hold a separate conference for rabi and kharif where not only agriculture ministers, but officers, scientists, agriculture universities and many other people participate.

Together, we decide on the roadmap. So, it is not that there is no such structure. But what should be done to make it better, this time we are getting extensive experience. I am also going to one state every day and this process will not stop after June 12 (the last day of the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan that began May 29). I will also go to the remaining states, regardless of whichever party is in power. Besides agriculture ministers, I also spoke to the Chief Ministers and urged them to cooperate in this campaign...

What are the problems farmers face today and which they shared with you?

Indian agriculture has diverse characteristics and problems. For instance, farmers in Odisha talked about damage to mango crops due to climate change... In Uttar Pradesh, they shared their concerns about disease in a sugarcane variety. In both states, farmers said new varieties should be developed. In Karnataka and Maharashtra, they spoke about increasing the shelf life of fruits and vegetables. There were also concerns re-

garding water shortage. The one thing, however, that I found in the whole country was that farmers expressed concern about substandard pesticides and seeds and they said that many times they get looted and harassed due to this, and hence a strict law should be made.

Agricultural land is shrinking and so is the number of farmers. How do you see this trend?

Land is decreasing but technology is changing. For example, we are now experimenting with solar panels on top and growing fruits and vegetables below. Hydroponics has started in many places which require less land. With the speed of urbanisation and industrialisation, cities will expand, agricultural land will gradually decrease. We will have to develop technology through which we can produce more on less land, and that is happening.

Have you flagged the concerns regarding diversion of agricultural land for making highways in the

government at any level?

We will have to think in a balanced way. You need highways, you need ports, you need railway lines, you need airports, you need industry, you need agriculture. India cannot function without agriculture...

The PM had set a target of doubling farmers income by 2022, what is the status now?

For many, it has increased tenfold. There are all kinds of examples. Ram Pratap Sharma is a farmer from Haryana, he lives in a village near Panipat. He is earning a profit of ₹21 lakh from seven acres. In Bengaluru, farmers are earning ₹6-7 lakh per acre by growing dragon fruit. I can give many examples. The income of many farmers has increased but this does not apply to all because of different factors: who is farming in what way, how much input is being used, what is the size of the land, how is the weather, how was the rain. Many things depend on circumstance but what is certain is that production and income are much better than before. I cannot speak for every farmer... overall, income has increased.

A new farming plan is in the works, prioritizing nutrients over fertilizers

Dhirendra Kumar
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NEW DELHI

In what may cause consternation among farmers, the Union government plans to cap subsidised fertilizer distribution and instead link allocation of soil nutrients to crop requirements and sowing patterns specific to different regions, two people said.

The move is aimed at controlling excessive fertilizer use, aligning domestic agricultural practices with India's export ambitions, optimizing the use of soil nutrients through scientific planning, and curbing

India's rising subsidy burden, one of them said.

The plan is currently under inter-ministerial consultation, this person added. If the government goes ahead with it, soil nutrients will be allocated to farmers through point-of-sale units located in their villages or panchayats (village councils) based on their crop requirements, said the second person mentioned above. Both of them declined to be identified.

"A calibrated fertilizer usage will not only help restore soil health but also improve the quality of crops, which is critical for meeting residue and quality norms in global mar-



The overuse of fertilizers depletes soil health, and puts a heavy burden on the government's subsidy bill.

kets," said Rakesh Aravattia, professor (finance), Institute of Rural Management Anand.

The overuse of fertilizers, especially urea, has become a dual challenge—depleting soil health, and putting a heavy burden on the government's

subsidy bill, although this has been declining gradually. The government's spending on providing fertilizers at subsidised prices declined from ₹2.54 trillion in FY24 and ₹1.77 trillion in FY25. For FY26, the subsidy has been pegged at ₹1.68 trillion.

Spokespersons of the ministries of agriculture and chemical and fertilizers did not immediately reply to *Mint's* queries.

The government's plan to cap the distribution of subsidised fertilizers risks becoming a politically vexed issue given the sensitivity of farmers to

changes in policy, according to some experts. India has seen two high-decibel farmers' protests in recent years. The first was over plans to liberalize rules on agriculture markets and trade, and the other over a proposal for private-sector involvement in the purchase, processing and marketing of crops.

"As a member of the government's MSP committee, I have submitted my recommendations to ensure better utilization of fertilizers," said Pramod Kumar Choudhary, who represents the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, a farmers' organization. MSP is the minimum sup-

port price at which the government procures crops from farmers to ensure a guaranteed income from farming.

"I have proposed that instead of routing subsidies through fertilizer companies, the government should transfer the amount directly to farmers' accounts. For example, a 45 kg bag of urea is currently priced at ₹242, whereas its actual cost is around ₹2,650. The difference—₹2,408—should go straight to the farmer, while fertilizer companies should be free to sell at the market price," Choudhary said.

For an extended version of the story, go to [livemint.com](https://www.livemint.com).

Challenging times for global trade; India will certainly cross \$825 bn exports this fiscal: Goyal

BERN, June 11: International trade is facing severe geo-political challenges, but India has consistently emerged as a winner in such times, and the country's exports of goods and services will certainly cross USD 825 billion in 2025-26, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said.

Despite global economic uncertainties due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Israel-Hamas war and the Red Sea crisis, the country's overall exports touched an all-time high of USD 825 billion against USD 778 billion in 2023-24.

As per estimates of certain multi-lateral bodies, there would be a contraction in global trade, Goyal said.

"The world is going through severe geo-political challenges... So these are challenging times, but India has always emerged (as) a winner in challenging times and we did a record USD 825 billion exports in 2024-25. This year, we hope to do much better," he told PTI.

When asked if last fiscal's figures will be crossed, he said: "We will certainly be able to cross that".

Apex exporters' body FIEO has projected that the country's overall goods and services exports are expected to grow by over 21 per cent year-on-year to USD 1 trillion during 2025-26.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO)

President SC Ralhan has said the healthy growth may come on account of international buyers seeking to diversify their sourcing in the wake of global economic uncertainties.

In 2025-26, merchandise exports are expected to grow 12 per cent to USD 525-535 billion from USD 437 billion in 2024-25, while services exports are likely to rise by about 20 per cent year-on-year to USD 465-475 billion from USD 387 billion in the last fiscal, according to FIEO.

The major sectors that are expected to show a significant jump in the shipments this fiscal include electronics, engineering, chemicals, tex-

tile and clothing, pharma and even the agriculture sector.

Free trade agreements with countries such as the UAE, Australia and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) will also help boost exports in the coming months. The India-EFTA trade agreement is expected to come into force from October 1 this year.

Goyal also said that FTAs signed during the Congress era were not good and have impacted domestic firms. They signed FTAs with countries like ASEAN, which are India's competitors; besides, they were not balanced, he said, adding that India opened more markets for those countries and "we did not

get" good deals in return.

On finished goods, he said, India removed the duties but import taxes on raw materials created inverted duty issues and that hurt "us a lot", he said.

He added that now the Modi government is doing FTAs with developed countries/regions like Australia, the UK, EFTA, the EU, the UAE, Oman, Peru, and Chile. "Here we collaborate, there is no competition... so we are doing FTAs with well thought out strategies," Goyal said.

India-EFTA signed the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) on March 10, 2024.

Under the pact, India has received an investment com-

mitment of USD 100 billion in 15 years from the grouping while allowing several products such as Swiss watches, chocolates, and cut and polished diamonds at lower or zero duties.

When asked if India would have to ease certain regulations to attract this investment, Goyal said it has been a commitment based on today's situation.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi is continuously focusing on ease of doing business, deregulation, reducing compliance burden, decriminalising the laws, making it attractive to do business in India," he said, adding that "I think this USD 100 billion will be exceeded and come faster". - PTI

In Hry, drones to help detect crop diseases

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chandigarh: The board of directors of Drone Imaging and Information Services of Haryana Limited (DRIISHYA) convened a meeting on Thursday under the chairmanship of chief minister Nayab Singh Saini, charting a course for expanded drone technology applications across the state. Key decisions focused on agricultural innovation, women's empowerment, and enhanced surveillance capabilities.

CM Saini initiated a directive for a pilot project aimed at leveraging drones for real-time crop health monitoring and disease detection. The move is designed to furnish



During a meet, Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini advocated for the integration of drone technology into natural farming practices

farmers with timely data, thereby mitigating crop losses. Saini specifically recommended the inclusion of disease-prone crops such as pota-

toes, chickpeas, cotton, paddy, and various vegetables in this pilot phase, anticipating a boost in agricultural yields and a reduction in crop dama-

ge. In a significant push for gender inclusivity and self-reliance, the CM mandated that DRIISHYA officers accelerate efforts under the "Drone Didi Yojana". The state has set an ambitious target to train 5,000 women in drone technology, with a directive to prepare an action plan for training approximately 500 women within the next quarter. This initiative is envisioned to technically empower women and unlock new self-employment avenues.

Saini advocated for the integration of drone technology into natural farming practices, particularly for the spraying of "Jeevamrit", a natural liquid fertiliser. He underscored the importance

of farmer training in these techniques to foster environmentally friendly and modern agricultural adoption.

Phool Kumar, CEO, DRIISHYA, briefed the CM on the agency's current operations, which include HT power line inspections, large-scale mapping, and disaster management. The CM was also informed that 243 candidates have completed UAV flight training at the Remote Pilot Training Organisation (RPTO), Karnal. Beyond the revenue department, drones are actively being utilised by various other departments, including urban local bodies, power, disaster management, mining, forests, traffic and agriculture.

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Hyderabad: Certified drone manufacturers in India have raised serious concerns over the widespread use and illegal sale of non-type certified drones, particularly those imported from China. These uncertified UAVs, industry representatives warn, violate the DGCA's Drone Rules 2021, endanger public safety, and could compromise national security.

Smith Shah, president of the Drone Federation of India, said the problem lies not in the absence of policy but in the failure of enforcement. "The policy is in place. These drones are usually brought into India through misdeclaration—either as separate parts or under misleading labels—and are assembled locally. When a drone is unregistered and flown without a licensed pilot, and especially if it can carry a few kilograms of payload, it becomes a potential national security threat," he said.

The influx of cheap Chinese drones, especially for agricultural use, has increased over the last few years. These drones often lack critical safety features like geo-fencing, return-to-home, and auto-landing, and are being operated by individuals without any formal pilot training. "A dumped Chinese drone is sold to a farmer, and when there is a malfunction or crop damage, the seller disappears," Shah said. The lack of trained operators has also led to uneven spraying of pesticides, which causes phytotoxicity and threatens crop yields.

Because non-TC drones

Illegal drones take flight, raise nat'l security concerns



Widespread Use Of Illegal, Unregistered Drones Raises Concerns Over Agriculture, National Security; Experts Urge Stricter Enforcement Of Policy

have not undergone efficacy tests or chemical residue checks, their use on crops could lead to violations of Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs). This risks contaminating produce and triggering export rejections, which could affect India's processed food chains and agricultural exports.

According to Shah, the DGCA's Drone Rules 2021 clearly prohibit the use of non-type certified drones, and the Di-

rectorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has banned the import of fully built drones. However, enforcement by customs, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, and aviation regulators remains weak. "There is a prohibition. Customs, DRI, and DGCA must enforce it strictly," he said.

Influencers To Blame

The role played by some YouTube influencers and online dealers is worsening the

problem. "Influencers openly promote illegal drones and enable sales through WhatsApp and other informal channels," a drone firm representative from Hyderabad said. These sellers often disappear after transactions, leaving buyers without service, support, or warranties.

THE RISK

Lack of trained operators leads to uneven spraying of pesticides, causing phytotoxicity and risking crop yield

• This risks contaminating produce and triggering export rejections, which could affect India's processed food chains and agricultural exports

• Lack of enforcement hurts certified players who invest heavily in R&D

There are influencers openly promoting illegal drones and enabling their sale through WhatsApp and other informal channels. These sellers often disappear after transactions, leaving buyers without service, support, or warranties – Drone firm representative from Hyderabad

When a drone is unregistered and flown without a licensed pilot, and especially if it can carry a few kilograms of payload, it becomes a potential national security threat – Smith Shah | DRONE

FEDERATION OF INDIA PRESIDENT

Lack of quality seeds, market for produce key challenges for Hry farmers: Experts

Bhavey Nagpal

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KARNAL: As the 15-day nationwide "Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan" (VKSA) ended with a programme by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in Gujarat on Thursday, heads of the ICAR institutes in Karnal presented the summary of Haryana chapter of the campaign, putting poor availability of quality seeds, lack of marketing access and awareness regarding crop insurance, loans and other subsidies as major challenges before farmers.

National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) director Dheer Singh, who was the Nodal Officer for VKSA in Haryana, said that 902 teams worked to gather the issues and written feedback or grievances were taken from the farmers during the campaign from May 29 to June 12.

At a press conference at his

office, Singh said that the teams comprising scientists from the central institutes, with support from the state government and other institutes visited 3,482 cluster villages in all 22 districts of the state and had a direct interaction with nearly 4.5 lakh farmers.

"We received feedback of more than 10,000 farmers and some common among them will be clubbed for a final report to be submitted with the higher authorities," the NDRI director said.

Ratan Tiwari, director, ICAR-Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research (IIWBR); Shiv Kumar Yadav, head, Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), regional station, Karnal; Rajan Sharma, joint director, NDRI, BS Meena, principal scientist and coordinator of VKSA in Karnal and others also joined the media interaction.

Officials said that the cam-



Officials said the campaign announced by Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan last month aimed to create awareness among farmers about modern technology and new seed varieties. FILE PHOTO

paign announced by Union minister Chouhan last month, aimed to create awareness among farmers about modern technology and new seed varieties, while also laying the foundation for advanced agriculture, modern farming techniques, introducing welfare schemes of the government and also hearing their grievances.

Among the major challenges faced by the farmers, NDRI and IIWBR directors said, is chronic shortages and poor timing of DAP, urea, gypsum and other as well as frequent adulteration in fertilisers, insecticides, oil cakes and seeds.

"Also among the major problems captured during the discussion were over use of nitrogen-

based fertilisers, particularly urea, need for effective management strategies against Bakanae disease in rice, poor seed germination and high weed pressure in direct-seeded rice (DSR). Farmers demanded introduction of high-yielding, salt-tolerant varieties of rice, wheat, and other major crops as well as short-duration rice varieties to support crop diversification and timely sowing, high-yielding crop varieties suited for natural and organic farming systems and strengthening of public sector hybrid development programs in rice, maize, and vegetables were other suggestions," IIWBR director Tiwari said.

Similarly, NDRI director said that they were told about persistent delays and blockages in subsidy disbursement, severe delays in crop insurance claims and cumbersome process of agri or animal loans.

May Trade Gap Narrows, Exports Dip 2.2%

Imports decline 1.7%; commerce secretary says good show amid global trade, geopolitical uncertainties

Our Bureau

New Delhi: India's goods exports declined 2.17% on-year to \$38.73 billion in May while trade deficit narrowed to \$21.88 billion in the month from \$26.4 billion in April and \$22.09 billion a year ago, official data released Monday showed.

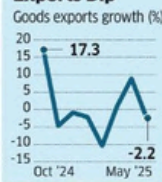
Imports declined 1.7% to \$60.61 billion in May. Gold imports fell 12.6% in the month.

"Despite global policy uncertainty regarding trade and conflicts which are going on, we have done extremely well," said commerce secretary Sunil Barthwal, adding that there was a sustained fall in petrol prices which has had a dampening impact on exports.

Exports to the US rose 16.9% in May and among sectors, electronic goods, inorganic and organic chemicals, pharma, ready-made garments, drove outbound shipments.

Barthwal added that India will continue with the policy of focussing on six key sectors that make up

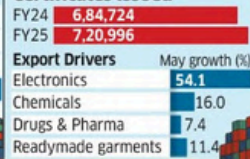
Exports Dip



Geographical Spread



Preferential Certificates Issued



75% of global imports. "Despite the negative forecast of WTO, India is doing much better...there are some conflicts we are watching from the perspective of trade," he said.

In May, 13 of the 30 key sectors registered a decline in exports.

"The latest trade figures reflect the robust performance of India's services sector, which continues to act as a buffer against the challenges of muted global demand, geopolitical tensions, and high interest rates," said S C Ralhan, president, Federation of

Indian Export Organisations (FIEO).

CHINA AND RARE EARTH MAGNETS

Barthwal said both diplomatic and commercial discussions are going on with China to address issues related to Beijing's export curbs on rare earth magnets, mainly used in the auto sector. China's restrictions on the export of rare earth elements and related magnets are affecting the domestic auto and white goods sectors.

"We are making all the efforts to see that these essential items of im-

ports can come to India... this diplomatic and commercial communication should yield a positive result," Barthwal said.

The automobile industry has sought government support in expediting approvals from the Chinese government to import rare earth magnets used in various applications including passenger cars. "These curbs are against all the countries and are not against India only," Barthwal said, adding that the government is in talks with both the

Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) and the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA).

"We are facilitating them to have discussions with their counterparts in China and at the diplomatic level the external affairs ministry and the department of commerce also have spoken to our ambassador over there," he said.

IRAN-ISRAEL CONFLICT

Barthwal said the government was closely monitoring the situation arising from the Iran-Israel conflict, and a meeting with shipping lines, container firms, and other stakeholders will be held this week to assess the impact on the country overseas trade and address any issue.

"We are watching the situation. We are also calling a meeting (this week) of all shipping lines, the container organisations and concerned departments, and stakeholders to understand the kind of issues they are facing and how we can sort it out," he said.

Govt will tighten seed & pesticide laws: Chouhan

SANJEEB MUKHERJEE & AGENCIES

New Delhi, 18 June

India will consider solutions to address the problem of stray animals and it will tighten legislation on seeds and pesticides to ensure quality, said Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday.

The easy availability of substandard seeds and pesticides was among the main concerns raised by farmers, along with limited availability of climate-resilient seeds, the growing menace of stray animals, and the falling yield of soybeans, he said at a press conference at the conclusion of the fortnight-long mass-contact programme called 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan'. The campaign, which began on May 29, reached over 13.4 million farmers in 142,934 villages.

"The new amendments to the Seed Act will improve traceability, bring uncertified seeds under regulation, increase the quantum of penalties, and be more farmer friendly," Agriculture Secretary Devesh Chaturvedi told reporters on the sidelines of the conference. He said the amendments would be tabled in Parliament by the winter session at the latest.

Chouhan said that scientists at Krishi Vigyan Kendras will be required to visit farmers' fields three days a week.

"I myself will go to the field among farmers two days a week," Chouhan said, adding that a similar directive had been issued to officials in the ministry.

The minister said the Centre would also launch a mobile application to provide real-time weather updates to farmers under the aegis of the Digital Farming Mission.



AGRICULTURE MINISTER SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN SAID THE GOVT WILL CONSIDER SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS ISSUE OF STRAY ANIMALS

Centre bats for greater role of farmers in regulation of seeds

The Union government believes that states should not have a major role in regulating seeds already approved by official agencies. It holds that farmers should have the freedom to decide what to sow.

Reacting to the recent order by the Punjab government banning the use of hybrid paddy seeds, a senior official said the matter is currently sub judice and should not be commented on. However, as a matter of principle, the Centre maintains that farmers should have the choice to grow the seeds they prefer.

SANJEEB MUKHERJEE

CLEAN ENERGY, FOOD SECURITY ON TOP OF BILATERAL AGENDA

India, Canada to resume FTA talks after 21-month pause

MUKESH JAGOTA
New Delhi, June 18

INDIA AND CANADA have agreed to resume negotiations on a free trade agreement (FTA) that were suspended in September 2023, just before New Delhi was to host the G-20 Summit.

In the first meeting between Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G-7 summit in Kananaskis in Canada, both leaders made the decision to normalise the ties beginning with the early return of High Commissioners to the capitals.

"The leaders also discussed the importance of restarting the stalled negotiations on the Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA), with a view to paving the way for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)," a statement by the ministry of external affairs said.

Both sides also discussed opportunities for future collaboration in areas like clean energy, digital transformation, LNG, food security, critical minerals, higher education, mobility and supply chain resilience, the statement added.

The suspension of trade negotiations was the first step and after that the ties nose-dived sharply as Canada's then Prime Minister Justin Trudeau accused India of interference in its domestic affairs and targeting its citizens. By October 2024, India had expelled the Canadian High Commissioner and withdrawn its High Commissioner in Ottawa.

Apart from the change in government in Canada, the disturbance in world trade by the actions of US President Donald Trump is also forcing countries to stitch up new trade alliances. Canada, which is the second-biggest exporter



Prime Minister Narendra Modi (left) meets Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on the sidelines of the 51st G7 Summit, in Kananaskis on Wednesday

TRADE TERMS

India-Canada goods trade

(\$ bn)
■ Export
■ Imports



2018-19	2.8	3.5
2019-20	2.8	3.8
2020-21	2.9	2.6
2021-22	3.7	3.1
2022-23	4.1	4.1
2023-24	3.8	4.5
2024-25	4.2	4.4

to the US after China, has been a special target of Trump.

Despite the political tensions, trade between India and Canada continued to grow. Bilateral merchandise trade between India and Canada

actually grew slightly during this period, from \$8.3 billion in FY2023 to \$8.4 billion in FY2024. India's imports from Canada increased to \$4.6 billion, while exports saw a marginal dip, falling to \$3.8 billion.

In 2024-25 India's exports to Canada increased 9.8% on year to \$4.2 billion while imports from Canada fell 2.3% on year to \$4.4 billion.

Apart from goods trade, both countries also have a substantial services trade.

The negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with Canada were started in 2010 but could not make much progress.

The negotiations were relaunched in March 2022. While discussions on the comprehensive trade agreement were on, both sides were also discussing an interim agreement with a limited scope which they named as Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA). The talks were suspended after both sides had held nine rounds of negotiations with the last round happening in July 2023.

Banned Cotton Seeds Carve Out ₹600-cr Parallel Market

Industry associations seek nod to test genetically modified variety this kharif

Jayashree Bhosale

Pune: Illegal herbicide-tolerant genetically modified (HTBt) cotton seeds, banned for environmental reasons, have quietly claimed about 15% of India's ₹3,600-crore cotton seed market, as it allows farmers to use herbicides to eliminate weeds and cut labour costs.

Industry associations have now approached central and state governments, seeking permission to test HTBt seeds developed by different companies in the current kharif season. They argue that use of illegal seeds has impacted cotton yields, leading to a spike in cotton imports. Despite no official approval, nearly 7.5 million packets of HTBt cotton seeds were sold last year, creating a parallel market worth ₹550-600 crore, industry insiders told ET.

HTBt cotton can withstand herbicides like glyphosate, allowing farmers to spray chemicals to get rid of weeds on cotton fields without having to employ manual labour. This addresses the issue of workforce shortage as well.

While more than 90% of cotton cultivated in India is genetically modified. Yet, the addition of herbicide-tolerant traits remains stuck in regulatory limbo due to concerns raised about environment and health issues.

Industry bodies National



Seed Association of India (NSAI) and Seed Industries Association of Maharashtra (SIAM) believe proper testing and regulation are keys to ensure minimal environmental impact and improve yields.

They have written letters to various authorities including environment, forest and climate change minister Bhupender Yadav, the agriculture ministry as well as the governments of Maharashtra and Telangana, warning about the "alarming spread of illegal HT cotton seeds across all the cotton producing states of India" and the need for testing the seeds developed by various entities.

"The rapid spread of the illegal seeds shows that farmers are looking for a solution for labour shortage and for ease of cotton cultivation," said Vaibhav Kashikar, treasurer at NSAI.

Farmers cautioned against overuse of chemical fertilisers, pesticides

Collector G Rajakumari distributes subsidised farm equipment to 964 marginal farmers in Nandyal district

V NARENDRA KUMAR
NANDYAL

AS part of the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation (SMAM), district Collector G Rajakumari announced the release of Rs 1.99 crore in subsidies for the distribution of agricultural machinery to 964 eligible small and marginal farmers.

Speaking at the distribution programme held at PGRS Hall in the Collectorate on Wednesday, she emphasised the government's commitment to promoting agricultural mechanisation for enhanced productivity and farmers welfare. Highlighting the significance of sustainable farming, she urged farmers to use water judiciously, especially in areas with abundant black soil and irrigation. She cautioned against overuse of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, warning that it could deplete soil nutrients and reduce yields. Instead, she encouraged farmers to adopt organic practices, crop rotation, and mixed cropping



District Collector G Rajakumari inspecting farm machinery in Nandyal on Wednesday

to improve soil health and long-term productivity. She also recommended use of drones and technology in agriculture to save time and resources.

In view of the ongoing cultivation of BPT Nandyal fine variety rice, the Col-

lector advised farmers not to rush into selling their produce prematurely. She said the government has established 145 warehouses equipped with essential infrastructure to help farmers store their harvests until they can get better prices.

Farmers were also encouraged to diversify crops based on climatic conditions, and she noted the success of exotic fruits like Miyazaki mangoes, which have thrived better in local conditions than in their native Japan. Plans are underway to

establish cold storages and warehouses with support from NABARD and the Horticulture Department.

Addressing the needs of tenant farmers, Rajakumari stated that out of one lakh tenant farmers in the district, 30,000 will be issued crop cultivator rights cards (CCRCs) this year, which remain valid for 11 months. She added that banks have been instructed to provide loans based on crop cultivation, and an additional 20% in loans will be sanctioned this year. With forecasts indicating higher rainfall, farmers were advised to stay informed about suitable cropping choices and avoid leaving fields fallow. The event concluded with the symbolic handover of subsidy cheques to beneficiary farmers and an inspection of farm machinery by the Collector at the venue.

District Agriculture Officer Muralikrishna, assistant agricultural officers, mandal agricultural extension officers, and local farmers were present.

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Kharif sowing grows 10% till June 20



Sowing of kharif crops continued its brisk pace during the week ended June 20, outstripping the acreage touched during the same time last year by 10 per cent. This came on the back of the southwest monsoon continuing its forward march across the country. Data showed that till June 20, kharif crops have been sown in around 13.74 million hectares. Among all crops, paddy, which is the main food grain grown during the kharif season, has been planted in around 1.32

million hectares till June 20, which is almost 60 per cent more than the area covered during the same period last year. Only oilseed sowing is lagging, but was expected to gather momentum as the monsoon enters Central India. India has received 105 millimetres of rainfall from June 1 to June 22 this year, which is 1 per cent lower than normal. Till the second week of June, this deficit was more than 30 per cent as monsoon stalled after making an early entry.

SANJEEB MUKHERJEE

Reaping benefits

Kharif sowing as on June 20 (in million hectares)

Crops	Normal area*	2024	2025	Change (%)
Urad	3.26	0.06	0.13	116.7
Moong	3.56	0.26	0.44	69.2
Paddy	40.3	0.83	1.32	59.0
Pulses	12.96	0.66	0.94	42.4
Coarse cereals	18.27	1.47	1.8	22.4
Maize	7.89	1.03	1.23	19.4
Cotton	12.95	2.91	3.12	7.2
Sugarcane	5.25	5.48	5.5	0.4
Oilseeds	19.46	0.54	0.53	-1.9
Soybean	12.71	0.31	0.3	-3.2
Arhar	4.47	0.26	0.24	-7.7
Groundnut	4.51	0.19	0.17	-10.5
Total	109.82	12.48	13.74	10.1

NOTE: Total might not match as it is only of broad crop categories
*Refers to the average area typically sown with Kharif crops in a given region

Source: Ministry of Agriculture

Asean is delaying review of trade deal with India: Official

MUKESH JAGOTA
New Delhi, June 23

THE 10-NATION Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is stonewalling the review of the goods trade agreement with India and even after the nine rounds of negotiations, the process is far from complete, a senior official said on Monday.

Both sides are working towards the 2025-end deadline for completing the review of Asean India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) and with just six months remaining, the movement has been very slow.

Within five years of the agreement on goods being activated in 2010, India had started asking for a review of the pact as its imports from Asean zoomed but it could not derive the expected benefits. It took India four years to bring Asean around to the need of review of the AITIGA.

"Asean agreed to review in November 2019 and for two years did not start negotiating on it. Even after several rounds of review negotiations, the progress has been very limited," the official added.

The official said in the AITIGA, while India slashed duties for 71% of its traded products, Indonesia brought tariffs down on just 41% of the products, Vietnam 66.5%

LITTLE PROGRESS

■ Both sides are working towards the 2025-end deadline for completing the review of Asean India Trade in Goods Agreement

■ With just six months remaining, the movement has been very slow

■ Trade deficit with Asean widened from \$4.98 bn in 2010-11, first full-year of AITIGA, to \$44.20 bn in 2024-25



■ While India slashed duties for 71% of its traded products, Indonesia cut tariffs on 41%, Vietnam 66.5% & Thailand 67%

■ India's exports to the region fell 5.77% on-year in 2024-25 to \$38.96 bn, while imports grew 5.65% to \$84.16 bn

and Thailand 67%. These countries had higher per capita income than India, but even then New Delhi agreed to more concessions than the Asean members, the official added.

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal had recently said it was "silly" on India's part to sign an FTA with Asean, which is now being used to route Chinese products into India.

The official said in many cases, the products entering India from Asean are subsidised at the production stage by Chinese suppliers of inputs, making it difficult to locate the unfair trade practice at the point of export. Now, in all dumping cases from Asean, the authorities

are examining the production costs of the inputs.

India also maintains that its exports to Asean have been impeded by non-reciprocity in FTA concessions, non-tariff barriers, import regulations and quotas.

Another Indian demand is strict adherence to Rules of Origin provisions of the agreement by Asean.

Since AITIGA became operational, the trade deficit with Asean widened from \$4.98 billion in 2010-11, the first full-year of operation of AITIGA, to \$44.20 billion in 2024-25.

India's exports to the region fell 5.77% on-year in 2024-25 to \$38.96 billion, while imports grew 5.65% to \$84.16 billion.

Haryana may ban 11 basmati pesticides

Vijay C. Roy

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NEW DELHI

Haryana is gearing up to ban hazardous pesticides in Basmati rice in an attempt to make it easier to export the grain to developed and other markets with high food safety standards.

Neighbouring Punjab—like Haryana a major agricultural state—has already enforced such a ban in order to meet what is known as the International Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs).

These two states account for nearly 70%–75% of India's basmati exports of 6 million tonnes (in FY25). MRL is the highest concentration of a pesticide or veterinary drug residue legally allowed in food or animal feed, established to ensure food safety based on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).

The Union government has also imposed a ban on four highly hazardous pesticides.

Basmati rice exports from India have been facing repeated rejection by the European Union, US, Japan, Oman, Kuwait, Lebanon, and UAE, owing to pesticide residues exceeding the prescribed



Punjab has already enforced such a ban in order to meet International Maximum Residue Limits.

MRLs of the importing country, according to Haryana Rice Exporters Association.

This has led to a substantial loss of export business, reputational damage, and a decline in India's market share, much of which has shifted to competitors like Pakistan.

The Haryana move seeks to replicate initiatives taken in Punjab.

"We have banned the sale, distribution, and use of 11

insecticides on basmati rice crops for a 60-day period, starting 1 August to 30 September, to address concerns

Basmati rice exports from India have been facing repeated rejection owing to high pesticide residues

about pesticide residues exceeding permissible limits," said a senior official in Punjab agriculture department.

The banned insecticides are Acephate, Buprofezin, Chlorpyrifos, Propiconazole, Thiamethoxam, Profenofos, Carben-dazim, Tricyclazole, Tebuconazole, Carbofuran

and Imidacloprid.

The Punjab Rice Millers and Exporters Association reported that tests conducted by them previously had shown these pesticides at levels that were much above the MRL values for basmati.

"So, our association requested for a ban on these agrochemicals to save the heritage basmati produce of Punjab, and to ensure hassle free export of basmati rice to other countries," said an exporter on the condition of anonymity.

Taking a cue from Punjab, Haryana basmati exporters also approached the state government seeking a ban.

"We have sought immediate intervention of the state government on prohibition on sale, stock, distribution and use of certain pesticides on basmati crop in Haryana to safeguard the integrity and global reputation of Basmati rice cultivated in the state," said Sushil Jain, president, Haryana Rice Exporters Association.

The pesticides for which a ban has been sought in Haryana are the same as in Punjab. The final decision on the ban will be taken in consultation with stakeholders.

Indogulf Crop Sciences Limited's Initial Public Offering to open on Thursday, June 26, 2025, Price band set at ₹105/- to ₹111/- per Equity Share



MUMBAI Indogulf Crop Sciences Limited has fixed the price band of ₹105/- to ₹111/- per Equity Share of face value ₹10/- each for its maiden initial public offer. The Initial Public Offering ("IPO" or "Offer") of the Company will open on Thursday, June 26, 2025, for subscription and close on Monday, June 30, 2025. Investors can bid for a minimum of 135 Equity Shares and in multiples of 135 Equity Shares thereafter.

The IPO is a mix of fresh issue of up to Rs 160 crore and an offer for sale up to 15,40,960 equity shares by Om Prakash Aggarwal (HUF), and up to

20,62,643 equity shares by Sanjay Aggarwal (HUF).

The proceeds from the fresh issue to the extent of Rs 65 crore will be used for funding working capital requirements of the company; Rs 34.12 crore for repayment/prepayment, in full or in part, of certain outstanding borrowings availed by the Company; Rs 14 crore for Capital expenditure of the Company for setting up an in-house dry flowable (DF) plant at Barwasni, District Sonapat, Haryana; and general corporate purposes. Indogulf Crop Sciences commenced its operations in 1993 and primarily operate under three

business verticals namely crop protection, plant nutrients and biologicals, to retail and institutional customers focused on improving the crop yield. It is engaged in the business of manufacturing of crop protection products, plant nutrients and biologicals in India. It is one of the first few indigenous manufacturers of Pyrazosulfuron Ethyl technical, with the minimum purity of 97% indigenously in India and commenced production in 2018. It is recognized as a 'Two Star Export House' and a growing exporter of crop protection, plant nutrients and biologicals products and it

exported its products to over 34 countries. (Source: CareEdge Report)

It manufacture and market extensive range of products in all types of available formulations such as water dispersible granules ("WDG"), suspension concentrate ("SC"), capsule suspension ("CS"), ultra-low volume ("ULV"), emulsion in water ("EW"), soluble granule ("SG"), flowable suspension ("FS"), etc. which can be in powder, granules and liquid form and catering to a broad spectrum of crops, including cereals, pulses and oilseeds, fibre crops, plantations, and fruits and vegetables. The

company's key customers include Krishi Rasayan Exports Private Limited, Delhi, Parijat Industries (India) Private Limited, Delhi, BR Agrotech Private Limited, Delhi, Crystal Crop Protection Limited, Delhi, and Asasiat of Development for Agric & Trade Co., UAE. It has also established long-term relationships with suppliers namely Coromandel International Limited, GSP Crop Science Private Limited, Gujarat, Dagro Chemical (Changzhou) Co. Ltd., China, Hubei Benxing Supply Chain Management Co. Ltd, China, and MaxxGro Agrology Private Limited, Delhi.

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