

ACFI NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2025

NEWS

China suspends exports of key fertilizers, again

RIPPLE EFFECT. The suspension, likely for 6 months, could lead to global shortage and a 10-15% increase in prices of the crop inputs

Our Bureau
Chennai

China has suspended the export of key fertilizers, including speciality ones such as technical monoammonium phosphate (TMAP) and urea-solution products such as AdBlue, besides conventional fertilizers like di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) and urea from October 15.

Rajib Chakraborty, National President, Soluble Fertilizer Industry Association (SFIA), said the Chinese suspension of the key fertilizers will continue until further notice and may prolong for the next 5-6 months.

"This could lead to a 10-15 per cent increase in the prices of fertilizers due to tight global supplies and uncertainty in countries depending on imports," he said in a statement.

The suspension of exports

of these speciality fertilizers could have some impact on India as China accounts for 95 per cent of these key crop input imports, totalling 2.5 lakh tonnes annually. Of this, 60-65 per cent is imported during the rabi season.

NO SHORTAGE NOW

Currently, demand for the rabi season is expected to be met through supplies secured via global trading channels, though the prices are likely to pressure to rise.

Specialty fertilizers include water-soluble fertilizers, micronutrients, and nano and biostimulant variants.

These are critical for improving soil health, nutrient absorption and the productivity of high-value crops, such as fruits and vegetables.

"There is no immediate shortage for the ongoing rabi season (October-March), as adequate supplies have already been secured by In-

Fertilizer prices in September 2025

	Sept 2025 average	Change from Aug (in %)	Change from last year (in %)
Natural gas (\$/mmbtu)	3.00	2.5	32.8
Ammonia (\$/tonne)	569.80	8.1	1.6
Urea (\$/tonne nitrogen)	968.30	-9.3	27.5
Ammonium nitrate (\$/tonne nitrogen)	1,190.00	-0.1	44.4
Phosphate (\$/tonne P2O5)	1,673.30	-1.7	28.1
Potash (\$/tonne K2O)	568.30	-0.6	22.9

Source: AMIS

dian traders through global sources. Farmers are advised to plan their fertilizer requirements early and avoid panic buying," Chakraborty said.

The SFIA President said India is also exploring alternative supply sources such as South Africa, Chile and Croatia to ensure continuous availability.

India may have to worry if the ban extends beyond March 2026. Earlier, China had curbed, among other commodities, the exports of

speciality fertilizers.

The ban was lifted following a meeting between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on August 19, 2025.

EXPECTED MOVE

The decision helped ease the shortage of DAP, which India was facing then. China, a dominant supplier of global agricultural inputs, halted exports of DAP since mid-2023. It stopped shipments of specialty fertilizers

to India during May and June this year, though exports to other nations continued.

This led to a sharp decline in global supply and pushed up prices, affecting Indian farmers during the kharif sowing season. Even as it lifted the restrictions on exports, China indicated that it would reimpose the ban from October.

According to the Agricultural Monitor Information System (AMIS) of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, local traders refrained from buying DAP in the Indian domestic market in September as farm-level off-take was muted due to high prices.

"India's robust import demand, a key driver in global fertilizer markets, eased this month (September). Meanwhile, increased fertilizer exports from China further weighed on global prices. The ratio of fertilizer prices relative to crop prices re-

mains elevated, in particular for phosphorus and potassium fertilizers," AMIS said.

ALTERNATIVE SOURCES

Trade sources said that Indian importers rushed to secure supplies after China lifted the curbs. On the other hand, global firms, too, looked at meeting India's demand.

Analysts said that no subsidy is offered for these fertilizers. Over 1.5 lakh tonnes of these technologically advanced fertilizers are imported between June and December.

While China typically meets 80 per cent of India's import demand during the key June-December period, importers turned to Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Russia and Jordan this year following the ban. However, the supplies from these countries couldn't bridge the demand-supply gap.

PRICES LIKELY TO RISE 10-15% AHEAD OF RABI SEASON

India faces specialty fertiliser price surge after China suspends exports

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: India is preparing for higher fertiliser prices ahead of the crucial rabi (winter) crop season after China suspended exports of urea and specialty fertilisers from October 15, a senior industry official said on Tuesday.

China, which had only recently resumed fertiliser exports from May 15 to October 15 with increased inspections, has now suspended the export window until further notice, affecting not just India but global markets as well.

The suspension covers specialty fertilisers like TMAP (Technical Monoammonium Phosphate) and Urea-solution products like AdBlue, as well as conventional fertilisers such as DAP and urea.

"China has closed the



China has closed the export window from October 15 not only for India but the entire world market

FILE IMAGE

HIGHLIGHTS

- » "I believe the export suspension will be for the next 5-6 months," Fertilizer Industry Association (SFIA) president Rajib Chakraborty said
- » India imports about 95 per cent of its specialty fertilisers, including phosphates like TMAP and emission-control fluids like AdBlue, from China

Chinese export curbs.

India consumes around 250,000 tonnes of specialty fertilisers annually, with 60-65 per cent used during the rabi season, which runs from October to March.

The industry official said meeting demand for the ongoing rabi season would not be a problem as traders have already secured supplies available through global trading agencies, though prices would be affected.

"If Chinese export curbs continue beyond March 2026 then it would be a concern," Chakraborty said, adding that the rabi season may extend until March this year due to better water availability.

India has alternative supply sources including South Africa, Chile and Croatia, but only for one or two products, he added.

export window from October 15 not only for India but the entire world market," Soluble Fertilizer Industry Association (SFIA) president Rajib Chakraborty stated.

"I believe the export suspension will be for the next 5-6 months," he said.

India imports about 95 per cent of its specialty fertilisers, including phosphates like

TMAP and emission-control fluids like AdBlue, from China.

Chakraborty said specialty fertiliser prices, already at abnormally high levels, could rise 10-15 per cent due to the

IISc team boosts pesticide efficiency

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: When farmers spray pesticides on crops, much of them never stick to the leaves. Because most plants have waxy and water-repellent surfaces, water droplets either roll away or bounce off. This not only reduces the effect of pesticides but also leads to soil and water contamination. Scientists at Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have now found a way to make pesticide sprays stick better using what they call "liquid marbles".

Liquid marbles (LMs) are tiny water droplets covered by a thin layer of hydrophobic particles. This coating keeps the droplets from spreading or evaporating too quickly. The idea was first used in laboratories for chemical and biochemical experiments, but a team at IISc's Centre for Nano Science and Engineering (CeNSE) saw a new use for it in agriculture.

The group was led by Prosenjit

Pic for representation



Sen, associate professor at CeNSE, and included Rutvik Lathia, a former PhD student who is now at Max Planck Institute for Polymer Research. "Around 50% of the pesticides are wasted because droplets bounce off leaves. Our method allows more of the pesticide to stay on the plant," said Lathia.

The team made LMs by rolling small droplets of water over beds of hydrophobic particles. They first tried materials such as glass beads and Teflon, but those were harmful to plants. So, they turned to organic alternatives such as lycopodium, a

Liquid marbles are tiny water droplets covered by a thin layer of hydrophobic particles. This coating keeps the droplets from spreading or evaporating too quickly

plant-based powder, and zein, a protein found in corn. These biodegradable materials were found to be safe and more effective. The team tested LMs on rose leaves coated with Teflon to mimic natural waxy surfaces. High-speed imaging showed the marbles stuck well and lost more energy on impact.

The next step, Sen said, is to make the process cheaper and scalable. "We need to develop a mechanism to create large numbers of LMs during pesticide spraying." The study was published in the *Journal of Colloid and Interface Science*.

New Australian research could help boost yields, cut water, nitrogen use

Our Bureau

Mangaluru

Australian researchers have created tiny structures to help supercharge photosynthesis, potentially boosting wheat and rice yields while slashing water and nitrogen use.

A media statement said that researchers from Associate Professor Yu Heng Lau's group at the University of Sydney and Professor Spencer Whitney's group at the Australian National University had spent five years tackling the problem to make plants fix carbon more efficiently.

"The team engineered nanoscale 'offices' that can house an enzyme called Rubisco in a confined space, enabling scientists to finetune compatibility for future use



in crops, which should allow them to produce food with fewer resources," the statement said.

INEFFICIENT ENZYME

Quoting Taylor Szyszka from the ARC Centre of Excellence in Synthetic Biology and the School of Chemistry at the University of Sydney, the statement said: "Rubisco is very slow and can mistakenly react with oxygen instead of carbon dioxide, which triggers a whole other process that wastes energy

and resources. This mistake is so common that important food crops such as wheat, rice, canola and potatoes have evolved a brute-force solution: mass-produce Rubisco."

In some leaves, up to 50 per cent of the soluble protein are just copies of this one enzyme, representing a huge energy and nitrogen expense for the plant. "It's a major bottleneck in how efficiently plants can grow," Davin Wijaya, a PhD candidate at the Australian National University, who co-led the study, said.

Early-stage trials at Australian National University aim to develop crops that fix more carbon dioxide, boosting yields while using less water and fertilizer — crucial as climate and population pressures strain global food systems.

India, EFTA trade agreement to come into force from today

India is offering 82.7% of its tariff lines or product categories, which covers 95.3% of EFTA exports of which over 80% of imports are gold

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The free trade agreement between India and the four-nation European bloc EFTA will come into force from Wednesday under which New Delhi has received an investment commitment of \$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.

The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. It was signed on March 10, 2024.

Domestic customers will get access to high-quality Swiss products such as watches, chocolates, biscuits, and clocks at lower prices as India will phase out customs duties under the trade pact on these goods over 10 years.

The bloc committed an investment of \$100 billion — \$50 billion within 10 years after the implementation of the agreement and another \$50 billion in the next five years — which would facilitate the creation of one million direct jobs in India. This is a first-of-its-kind pledge agreed upon in



Domestic customers will get access to high-quality Swiss products such as watches, chocolates, biscuits, and clocks at lower prices

any of the trade deals signed by India so far.

There is a provision in the pact, officially known as Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA), that if the proposed investments would not come because of some reasons, India can re-balance or suspend the duty concessions to the four countries.

India is offering 82.7 per cent of its tariff lines or product categories, which covers

Key Points

- Bloc committed an investment of \$100 billion — \$50 billion within 10 years after implementation of pact & another \$50 billion in next five years
- There is a provision in pact, that if proposed investments don't come due to some reasons, India can re-balance/suspend duty concessions
- Sectors such as dairy, soya, coal and sensitive agricultural products are kept on the exclusion list

95.3 per cent of EFTA exports of which more than 80 per cent of imports are gold.

Sectors such as dairy, soya, coal and sensitive agricultural products are kept on the exclusion list and there will not be any duty concessions on these goods.

In the services sector, India has offered 105 sub-sectors to the EFTA like accounting, business services, computer services, distribution and health.

On the other hand, the country has secured commitments in 128 sub-sectors from Switzerland, 114 from Norway, 107 from Liechtenstein, and 110 from Iceland.

Segments where Indian services will get a boost include legal, audio-visual, R&D, computer, accounting, and auditing.

Further the pact would provide an opportunity for domestic exporters to integrate into EU (European Union) markets. Over 40 per cent of Switzerland's global services exports are to the EU. Indian companies can look to Switzerland as a base for extending their market reach to the EU.

Commenting on the pact, Gulzar Didwania, Partner, Deloitte India, said that as the TEPA is now set to come into force, the opportunities available to India align with each member's strengths.

"Swiss pharma and medical devices can pair India's high-quality medical ecosystem; precision machinery and industrial automation from Switzerland and Liechtenstein can anchor Make in India supply chains; Norway can drive green maritime, offshore wind, digital ports and carbon management; and Iceland's renew-

able power and geothermal expertise can underwrite low carbon compute and industrial decarbonisation," Didwania said.

TEPA was the 14th trade deal that India has signed with individual countries and regional blocs. TEPA is the first trade agreement with developed countries from the Western Hemisphere.

This will be the fifth agreement of the Modi-led government. India signed pacts with Mauritius, the UAE, UK, and Australia. Talks are at an advanced stage with the US, Oman, EU, Chile, New Zealand and Peru for FTAs.

India's exports to the EFTA bloc rose by 1.22 per cent to \$1.97 billion in 2024-25 from \$1.94 billion in 2023-24. Imports jumped to \$22.44 billion in 2024-25 from \$22.05 billion in 2023-24. The two-way trade stood at \$24.41 billion in the last fiscal. The trade gap is in the favour of the bloc with a \$20.47 trade deficit in 2024-25.

The biggest trading partner of India in the bloc is Switzerland (exports \$1.47 billion and imports \$21.8 billion in 2024-25), which already has zero customs duties on almost all industrial goods.

Five more states to provide digital identities to farmers

● 72 million IDs created in 14 states so far

SANDIP DAS
New Delhi, October 7

FIVE MORE STATES — Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir — will join the government's flagship scheme that seeks to provide unique IDs for farmers.

According to official sources, 14 states have so far provided over 72 million such IDs also referred to as Kisan Pehchaan Patra.

The target is to issue 90 million such IDs by the end of FY26 and 110 million in another one year, so that it is easier for policymakers capture farmer demographic profiles, landholdings, and cropping patterns.

The facility is also expected to enable states to design targeted schemes.

Uttar Pradesh (14.7 million), Maharashtra (11.8 million), Madhya Pradesh (9.1 million), Rajasthan (7.8 million), Gujarat (5.7 million), Andhra Pradesh (4.5 million), Tamil Nadu (3.1 million) and

AGRI PUSH

Top five states in terms of farmers' digital IDs (in mn)

Uttar Pradesh	14.7
Maharashtra	11.8
Madhya Pradesh	9.1
Rajasthan	7.8
Gujarat	5.7



Telangana (3.1 million) lead the issue of farmer IDs.

In 2025-26 under Agri-Stack, the government has made an allocation of ₹4,000 crore for developing farmer registries, including legal heir systems, and ₹2,000 crore for conducting the digital crop survey (DCS aimed at incentivizing states to accelerate their adoption of digital tools.

Under AgriStack — data-

bases of Geo-referenced village maps, crop sown registry and the farmers registry IDs are being created while 30 states in principle have agreed to create these digital tools.

For crop output estimates, DCS is being conducted across 18 states and union territories in the kharif season of 2025-26, an official said, adding that more states need to be onboarded to conduct this across the country.

At present, 29 states, with the exception of West Bengal and few UTs, have signed MoUs or Agri-Stack implementation.

"We have also started using the crop sown data under DCS to verify whether the farmer has grown the same crop as claimed while taking loans under the Kisan Credit Cards and while applying for the crop insurance," an official said.

With progress in farmers digital identity IDs generation and digital crop survey (DCS), the government has started using these data for providing a hosts of services — direct cash transfer under PM Kisan, digital agricultural credit, benefits under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and issuance of soil health cards.

Increase agri credit to meet rural demand: FM to banks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ballari, 17 October

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has urged rural banks to increase agricultural credit disbursement to meet the growing demand of new rural India, while reviewing the business performance of Karnataka Grameena Bank (KaGB) here.

According to an official statement, Sitharaman chaired the meeting, attended by Department of Financial Services (DFS) Secretary M Nagaraju, NABARD Chairman Shaji K V, and other senior officials from the finance ministry on Thursday.

During the review, Sitharaman assessed key indicators, including credit growth, NPAs, financial inclusion, and the implementation of government-sponsored schemes by KaGB. She advised the bank to increase its share in ground-level agriculture credit disbursement, with special focus on emerging areas of the economy.

Sitharaman also directed all stakeholders to take steps

to realise the potential of allied agricultural activities in the region.

“KaGB and Canara Bank should work closely with state government departments to enhance credit disbursement to the MSME and allied sectors,” the statement said.

Referring to the rationalisation of GST rates, she said it has opened new opportunities in rural areas due to rising consumption, indicating greater funding potential for banks. She nudged rural banks to leverage this opportunity to meet credit needs in semi-urban and rural regions.

Highlighting the capital needs of Farmer-Producer Organisations (FPOs), Sitharaman said, “While their capital requirements are often met by development financial institutions and government departments, their working capital needs should be fulfilled by banks.” She emphasised that rural banks should upgrade products and services to suit the convenience and demand of FPOs, enabling both banks and FPOs to leverage resources for mutual benefit and sustainable rural growth.



WEF, GoI launch AI playbooks for SMEs and agriculture

Developed with support of BCG X, these publications offer actionable frameworks, sectoral roadmaps, and ecosystem models to harness AI responsibly

AI ROADMAP

- The AI White Paper presents a two-part framework, strategic & operational
- It helps to integrate AI into agriculture and small business
- The playbook highlights AI's potential to enhance crop yields
- Unlock finance, improve market access
- Analyse on-ground pilot projects with entrepreneurs, policymakers

NEW DELHI

THE World Economic Forum, in collaboration with the Government of India, on Wednesday launched AI playbooks for SMEs and agriculture as well as an AI sandbox white paper to accelerate responsible AI adoption in the country.

Developed with support



from professional services partner BCG X, these publications offer actionable frameworks, sectoral roadmaps, and ecosystem models to harness AI responsibly, inclusively, and at scale in India, the WEF said.

The playbooks highlight AI's potential to improve productivity, unlock finance, and enhance market access and have been designed through extensive consultations, site visits, field workshops and analysing a multitude of on-ground pilot projects with

entrepreneurs, policymakers, industry leaders, technology providers, and academic institutions.

The World Economic Forum's Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) India collaborated with the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India (PSA to GoI) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) for these publications under the AI for India 2030 initiative. 'Future Farm-

ing in India', the AI playbook for agriculture, provides an actionable roadmap to bridge the gap between AI's potential and real-world impact for millions of farmers.

It introduces a comprehensive strategy for scaling artificial intelligence to enhance crop yields, mitigate climate and pest risks, and improve market access. 'Transforming Small Businesses', the AI playbook for SMEs in India, provides a strategic roadmap to address key challenges of productivity, access to formal credit, and market reach by democratising AI.

It introduces a structured, cluster-based approach to adoption, featuring real-world case studies and a clear framework for implementation. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of India's economy, contributing 30 per cent to GDP, employing over 23 crore people, and accounting for nearly half of the country's exports.

Fertiliser imports soar 75% in H1, urea surges 138%

SANDIP DAS
New Delhi, October 22

IN ANTICIPATION OF robust demand on surplus monsoon and winter crop sowing, the imports of urea, diammonium phosphate (DAP) and NPK variants of soil nutrients have surged in the first half of the current fiscal year. This signals the government's keenness to ensure adequate supply of fertilisers next season.

In the last kharif season, there were several reports of shortage of urea, as the production and imports could not match the demand, which spiked over 5% on year.

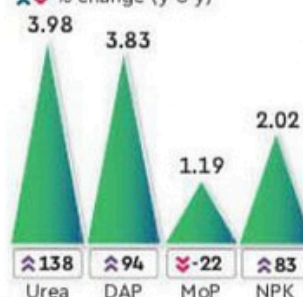
According to industry sources, the total volume of import of all varieties of fertilisers—urea, DAP, NPK (nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium) and muriate of potash (MOP)—rose by over 75% to 11 million tonne (MT) during April-September of 2025-26 compared to same period in the previous fiscal.

Imports of urea and DAP have soared by 138% and 94%

SOIL BOOST

Fertiliser import April-Sept, 2025-26

▲ Import (in million tonne)
▲ % change (y-o-y)



Fertiliser import (in million tonne)



to 3.98 MT and 3.83 MT, respectively in the first six month of FY26 compared to the same period in 2024-25.

Import of NPK variants of soil nutrients rose by over 83% to 2.02 MT in April-September, 2025-26 on year while only MOP import fell by 22% to 1.19

MT in the first half of the current fiscal.

Sources said that the government's fertiliser subsidy bill for FY26 could see a rise from the budget estimates (BE) of Rs 1.67 lakh crore, owing to a steep rise in urea and DAP prices since the beginning of April.

Cabinet approves Nutrient-Based Subsidy rates for Rabi Season 2025-26

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, 28 October

The Union Cabinet Tuesday approved the proposal of the Department of Fertilisers for fixing the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for the Rabi Season 2025-26 on Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilisers.

Making this announcement at a press conference, Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw said: "This decision aims to ensure the availability of fertilisers to farmers at subsidised and affordable prices."



The budgetary requirement for Rabi season 2025-26 is approximately Rs 37,952.29 crore, which is around Rs 736 crore more than the budgetary

requirement for Kharif season 2025.

The subsidy on P&K fertilisers, including Di Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) and NPKS grades, will be provided based on approved rates for Rabi 2025-26 to ensure smooth availability of these fertilisers to farmers at affordable prices.

The government aims to ensure the availability of fertilisers to farmers at subsidised, affordable, and reasonable prices. The rationalisation of subsidy on P&K fertilisers will be done in view of recent trends in international prices of fertilisers and inputs.

Agriculture varsity develops tech to create Vitamin-D enriched mushroom powder

MANAV MANDER

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, OCTOBER 11

In a country where Vitamin D deficiency affects nearly 70 per cent of the population, Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) has taken a major step towards offering a natural, food-based solution, by commercialising its Vitamin-D enriched mushroom powder technology.

Mushrooms, widely appreciated for their flavour and versatility, are also the only vegetarian source of Vitamin D. When exposed to ultraviolet (UV) light or sunlight, their Vitamin D content can increase up to 400 times, making them a potent nutritional source.

Recognising this potential, PAU has developed a process that converts UV-treated button and oyster mushrooms into a shelf-stable powder rich not only in Vitamin D but also in protein, fibre and essential minerals such as iron, copper, phosphorus, potassium, zinc and selenium.

The university has signed a Memorandum of Agree-



PAU has signed an memorandum of agreement with Guru Kirpa Enterprises for production and marketing of mushroom powder.

ment (MoA) with Guru Kirpa Enterprises, granting non-exclusive rights for the production and marketing of this innovative powder. The agreement was signed by Dr Ajmer Singh Dhatt, director of research, and Neetu Thapar from the firm, in the presence of university scientists and industry representatives.

The technology was jointly developed by Dr Sonika Sharma, professor, Department of Food and Nutrition, and Dr Shammi Kapoor, for-

mer dean, College of Basic Sciences. "This powder offers a safe, natural alternative to synthetic supplements, which often carry risks of toxicity and side effects," said Dr Sharma.

"It's a food-based approach to improving serum Vitamin D levels in deficient populations—with long-term benefits and no adverse effects."

Dr Khushdeep Dharni, associate director, Technology Marketing and IPR Cell, said the initiative was aimed

at real-world impact. "This is not just about innovation—it's about impact. We want our technologies to reach entrepreneurs and the public alike," he noted.

He also highlighted the economic scope of mushroom processing. "There's a glut of mushrooms during the winter season, and being highly perishable, they often go to waste. Value addition through powder processing ensures year-round availability and better revenue generation," Dr

Dharni added.

Dr Deepika Vig, coordinator of research, College of Community Science, and Aadvik Thapar from the firm were also present at the signing.

As consumer preference shifts towards functional and natural foods, PAU's Vitamin-D enriched mushroom powder promises to bridge the gap between nutrition and sustainability, while creating new avenues for agri-based entrepreneurship.



Indian, Turkish researchers study how digital tools can transform agricultural productivity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
in New Delhi

Researchers from the National Institute of Technology (NIT) in Rourkela and the Azerbaijan State University of Economics, Turkey have studied insights on how digital tools and renewable energy can transform agricultural productivity and sustainability in 27 developing countries, according to officials.

The research team has conducted the study covering 27 developing countries, including India, revealing how internet use, mobile connectivity, renewable

energy, agricultural land and fertiliser consumption collectively shape the nature of food production in a rapidly-changing world.

The findings of the research have been published in the prestigious "Technology Analysis and Strategic Management" journal. According to Narayan Sethi, Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, NIT-Rourkela, in the current technology-driven environment, no aspect of progress is untouched by digital technologies.

"From how we communicate and work to how we

produce food and meet our energy needs, everything is experiencing a revolution driven by the internet and renewable energy. The internet in agriculture has changed how we produce, market and consume food. Farmers can now check market rates before selling their produce, compare fertiliser prices online and learn sustainable-farming techniques," Sethi said.

"In many rural communities, a simple mobile phone can bridge the gap between farmers and markets, improving transparency, bargaining power and overall efficiency. Along with emerg-

ing technological trends, the growing shift toward renewable energy is also changing agricultural practices. Solar-powered irrigation is potentially helping smallholder farmers overcome the challenge of irregular electricity supply," Sethi added.

Speaking about how the internet and renewable energy are influencing agriculture, Sethi said the agricultural sector is a major source of employment and income in developing countries like India. However, it is also prone to varying effects of climate change.

"Thus, the government can prioritise training pro-

grammes for encouraging sustainable farming through multiple cropping systems, irrigation techniques and the appropriate use of fertilisers. Additionally, digital literacy, subsidised or zero-cost credit facilities and financial inclusion should be prioritised to support small- and medium-sized farm holders for higher agricultural productivity from technological advancement and renewable-energy use.

"With the changing global scenario, higher investments supporting ICT inclusion, renewable-energy use and sustainable land-use practices are crucial for strength-

ening the agri-food sector to enhance food security, economic growth and environmental benefits in developing countries," he said.

The research team used advanced econometric methods to analyse agriculture-related data from 27 developing countries, spanning 2000 to 2021.

The countries are India, Argentina, China, Pakistan, Ghana, Malaysia, Togo, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nigeria, Thailand, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Tunisia, Botswana, Jordan, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Panama, Tanzania, Costa Rica, Mexico, the Philippines, Kenya,

Dominican Republic, Mozambique and El Salvador.

The researchers found that internet use, mobile phones and renewable energy each individually boosts agricultural productivity. However, when used together, their combined effect can sometimes be detrimental. This is mainly due to challenges such as unreliable electricity, limited internet connectivity and low digital literacy in rural areas.

Litu Sethi, research scholar, NIT-Rourkela, noted that agriculture is the backbone of developing countries, accounting for more than 50 per cent of the workforce

engaged in farming activity directly or indirectly.

"Sustainable agricultural practices can create win-win situations by enhancing socio-economic conditions and positively contributing to the environment. Governments in developing countries should invest in ICT infrastructure to expand internet access for rural farmers and promote digital literacy through training programmes," Sethi said.

"Policies that provide free or subsidised mobile services can help smallholder farmers access vital information on markets, weather and soil health.

Rs 42,000 crore push for farm growth

NEW DELHI, Oct 11: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated projects worth Rs 42,000 crore to transform the agricultural and allied sectors.

Two major schemes — the PM Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana and Mission for Anti-microbial Resistance in Pulses were launched with an outlay of Rs 35,440 crore.

Projects valued at over Rs 3,400 crore were also rolled out in the agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, and food processing sectors.

Modi also laid the foundation stone for additional projects worth around Rs 815 crore. Addressing the event, the Prime Minister noted that farmers have a major role in building a developed India.

"Farmers have a bigger role in making India 'Viksit Bharat'. India must become not only self-reliant in food, but also produce export-oriented crops for the global

market," he said.

The Prime Minister added that the recent GST reduction has given maximum benefits to rural India and farmers. While the previous government neglected the agricultural sector, the PM said the sector has seen remarkable growth in the last 11 years.

"India's agricultural exports have nearly doubled in the last 11 years. Grain production has increased by nearly 900 lakh metric tonnes. Fruit and vegetable production has increased by more than 640 lakh metric tonnes. Today, India is number one in milk production. We have undertaken reforms... from seeds to markets in the interest of farmers," the Prime Minister said.

Modi urged the need to "continuously strive to improve in every field, keep making progress," to become a developed country.



FARM BOOST

- Modi unveiled Rs 42,000-cr farm projects.
- Launched Dhan Dhaanya Yojana, Pulses Mission worth Rs 35,440 cr.
- Urged farmers to grow exports, boost pulses.
- Said GST cuts aided rural India.
- Farm exports doubled; India tops in milk.
- Focus on livestock, fisheries, beekeeping.
- New labs, plants, 10,000 FPOs launched.

placed on animal husbandry, fish farming and beekeeping. This has empowered small farmers and landless families.

lages, farmers, and animal rears the most," the Prime Minister said.

Modi also urged farmers to diversify crops beyond wheat and rice, focusing on pulses to ensure protein security. The pulses mission is necessary to reduce India's import dependency by enhancing domestic production, he said.

Other projects inaugurated include artificial insemination training centres in Bargarh and Jammu and Kashmir; centres of excellence at Amreli and Baran; an IVF lab in Assam under the Rashtriya Gokul Mission; milk powder plants at Mehsana, Indore, and Bhiwani; and a fish feed plant under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana at Taptir.

The event also marked important milestones achieved under government initiatives of which 1,100 FPOs recorded an annual turnover of over Rs 1 crore in 2024-25. IANS

North East is the heart of India's growth story: Modi

NEW DELHI, Oct 11: For the first time, the northeast is not the periphery but the pulsating heart of India's growth story, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday. The Prime Minister further stated that from new airports to empowered self-help groups, and from connectivity to creativity, Arunachal Pradesh mirrors the spirit of Viksit Bharat.

PM Modi shared an article on X, written by Union Minister Jyotirmoy Sinha, that underscores the transformation and growing importance of Arunachal Pradesh in the nation's development journey. "From new airports to empowered SHGs, from connectivity to creativity, Arunachal Pradesh mirrors

the spirit of Viksit Bharat. A must-read piece by Union Minister Sinha," the Prime Minister posted on X.

According to Sinha, our 'Ashitkala' is no longer a distant frontier but a vibrant hub of India's progress.

"I share my awe-inspiring visit to Arunachal Pradesh's Ziro Valley, witnessing its rapid transformation, while cherishing its timeless cultural heritage, all aligned with PM Modi's transformative vision of a Rising Northeast," the minister highlighted.

In the article, Sinha said every time I set foot in the Northeast, "I feel reenergised and refuelled."

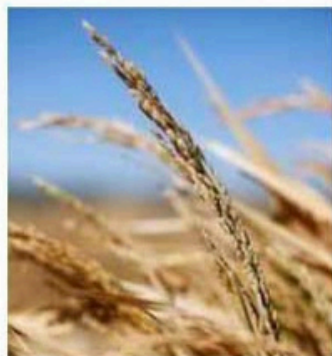
"Many call it the periphery of India, however, it is the very heart, beating in sync with

Anti-GM activists question 'advantages' of ICAR's two gene-edited rice varieties

Prabhudatta Mishra
New Delhi

The Coalition for a GM-Free India on Thursday alleged that the trial results for two genome-edited rice varieties — Pusa DST-1 and DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala) — have been rigged and hyped to manufacture false claims of success. Quoting Annual Reports (2023 and 2024) of ICAR's All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on rice, it said the ICAR's conclusions directly contradict its own data.

Briefing media, the coalition members accused the ICAR and the Ministry of Agriculture of perpetrating "scientific fraud" in the promotion of genome-edited rice varieties. The two gen-



ome-edited rice varieties were announced by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on May 4 as a global first achievement.

NO TESTING DATA

"As has become the habit with biotech lobbies in the country, seen earlier with Bt brinjal and GM mustard, science is yet again being compromised to push some gen-

ome-edited varieties as miracle seeds for India," the coalition said in a statement.

Pusa DST-1 (IET 32043) was claimed to outperform its non-GM parent MTU-1010 under saline and alkaline soils while DRR Dhan 100 'Kamala' (IET 32072), derived from BPT 5204, was declared to yield 17 per cent higher and mature 20 days earlier, having higher nitrogen efficiency.

But the coalition said according to the AICRP report, Pusa DST-1 showed no testing data for claimed drought or salinity tolerance in 2023 due to "limited seed quantity." In the same year's trial, Pusa DST-1 also showed at par or 4.8 per cent lower yield compared to parent MTU-1010, and underperformed in 12 of 20 sites.

In 2024, the same Pusa DST-1 variety showed no yield advantage in coastal or inland salinity trials, but only 1.6 per cent gain in alkaline soils. Yet, the summary table claims "30 per cent higher yield", selectively drawing on results from just 8 locations in one zone, the coalition alleged.

For DRR Dhan 100, the coalition claimed that it underperformed in 8 of 19 trial sites and performed significantly worse than its parent in two zones (eastern and central), though the yield gain was 4.3 per cent in the south zone in 2023 trials. Next year, data from several sites were excluded without explanation, and results from 6 sites were used to project a 17.21 per cent higher yield, the coalition said.

Agriculture sector holds immense potential in J&K, Omar tells FICCI

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

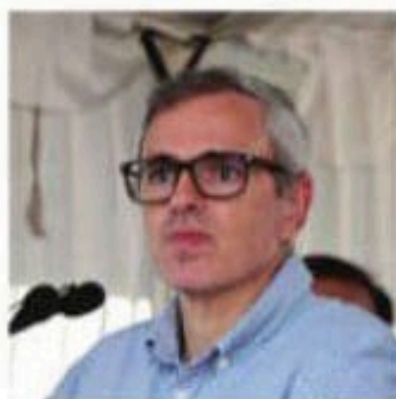
Jammu, 14 October

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said that the agriculture sector in the state holds immense potential and requires focused attention towards value addition to unlock full gamut of business opportunities.

The Chief Minister made these remarks while addressing the National Executive Committee Meeting of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by FICCI President Harsh Vardhan Agarwal, Senior Vice President Anant Goenka, Director General FICCI Jyoti Vij, Past President Dr. Jyotsna Suri, Chairman FICCI J&K Council Mushtaq A. Burza, and members of the National Executive Council.

Highlighting the immense potential of the agriculture sector, the Chief Minister said that most of the produce from Jammu and Kashmir leaves



the region in its raw form, with very little processing or value addition being done locally. "This opens significant opportunities for industrial growth, both on Jammu side and Kashmir's side," he stated.

Referring to the broader economic scenario, the Chief Minister said that the J&K has faced challenges due to recent natural calamities and the downturn in tourism following the Pahalgam incident, but the administration remains optimistic about revival across sectors.

"This is not a story of pessimism but of hope and optimism. We are working hard with all stakeholders to put the economy back on track," he said.

Odisha should become a "Seed Hub" in pulses - Dy CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, 23 October:

The state government has decided to promote cultivation of pigeonpea, black gram and lentils through a cluster approach informed Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo on Thursday. He held a meeting on an intensive agriculture program including revival & sustainable intensification of forgotten foods. ICRISAT has developed a variety of pigeonpea named ICPV25444, which can be grown in all-season and can tolerate intense heat up to 45° Celsius and can be produced in 120 days time period. This variety can become a game changer in the context of self-reliance in pulses. The Deputy Chief Minister suggested promotion of this variety along with traditional ones such as Dangararani and Kandula which are now coming in a category of forgotten varieties by the Odisha State Seeds Corporation Ltd. Odisha should become a "seed hub" in pulses, the Deputy CM added.

5,000 FPOs must have turnover above ₹1 cr by FY26: Chouhan

SANDIP DAS
New Delhi, October 30

AGRICULTURE MINISTER SHIVRAJ Singh Chouhan on Thursday called for increasing annual sales turnover of at least 5,000 farmers producer organisations (FPOs) to above ₹1 crore each by FY26 for achieving economy of sale and financial sustainability.

"Sales turnover of at least 50% of 10,000 farmers' collectives should cross ₹1 crore each by end of FY26, while in the next fiscal we can target all the collectives to clock ₹1 crore sales," Chouhan said after inaugurating national FPO conclave 2025 here.

The minister also called on collectives to enroll over 20 million farmers as shareholders from the current level of 5 million by the end of FY26.

Of over 10,000 FPOs set up



under a special incentive scheme launched in FY21, 340 FPOs have crossed ₹10 crore sale turnover, while over 1,100 farmers collectives have reported sales exceeding ₹1 crore in FY25. Cumulative turnover of these farmers' collectives have crossed ₹16,700 crore, according to the agriculture ministry data.

He also suggested that each of the FPOs should hold a licence for selling and distributing seeds, fertilisers and pesticides so that profits earned by

collectives and farmers get these inputs at a reasonable prices from the companies. "In each district, a major farmers owned organisation should emerge in the line to AMUL model," he said.

To boost business prospects, FPOs are being granted various input licences and dealerships in seed (6046), pesticide (4246) and fertilisers (5709). This enables them to run input businesses too and improve financial viability. An official said the financial assistance and marketing support to these collectives, where over 5 million farmers have equities, would continue till FY27. Most of the FPOs under the scheme have been formed in the last couple of years.

The high growth FPOs have boosted their profiles making use of government platforms like Open Network for Digital Commerce.

GST portal introduces facility to provide details for import of goods

Our Bureau
New Delhi

Businesses can now record import-related entries in the Invoice Management System (IMS) under GST, enhancing convenience for GST assesses, according to the tax department.

"A new section for 'Import of Goods' has been introduced in IMS, wherein the Bill of Entry (BoE) filed by the taxpayer — including imports from SEZ — will be made available in IMS for appropriate action," said an advisory issued by the GST portal. This functionality will be available starting from the October 2025 tax period.

ITC REVERSAL

GST operates on a self-assessment model, requiring taxpayers to determine input tax credit (ITC) eligibility based on legal provisions.

In cases where the GSTIN



in a BoE has been amended and the previous GSTIN (G1) had already availed of ITC, the earlier GSTIN must reverse the ITC claimed.

Accordingly, entries for ITC reversal due to GSTIN amendments will be shown to the previous GSTIN.

To address scenarios where ITC has already been reversed, partially or fully, by the previous GSTIN, the portal now allows taxpayers to declare the amount of ITC to be reversed, ensuring it does not exceed the original BoE value.

If no action is taken on an individual BoE, it will be

deemed accepted. Based on the actions taken, the GST portal will generate a draft GSTR-2B for the recipient on the 14th of the following month.

The IMS, introduced from the October 2024 tax period, allows recipient taxpayers to accept, reject or keep pending individual records uploaded by suppliers via GSTR-1/1A/IFF. This empowers recipients to manage inward supplies directly on the GST portal.

ACCURATE ITC CLAIMS

According to the GST Network (GSTN), the IMS is optional. If no action is taken, all entries are considered deemed accepted.

Reverse charge and import-related entries from ICEGATE and DGFT will flow directly into GSTR-2B and are not part of the IMS. The system aims to help taxpayers match invoices with supplier records to claim accurate ITC.

Coromandel International to invest ₹2,000 crore in Kakinada facility

KV Kurmanath
Hyderabad

Sankarasubramanian S, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Coromandel International, said the company is implementing a multi-pronged strategy to achieve self-reliance in the phosphatic fertilizer sector and reduce dependency on China for raw material. The strategy includes an investment of ₹2,000 crore at its Kakinada facility.

To reduce its dependency on imported raw materials and finished products, particularly from China, Coromandel is focusing on creating integrated domestic capacity.

The strategy is primarily driven by challenges in procuring key inputs, and the scarcity of DAP (Diammonium Phosphate) imports following China halting exports and recurring delays due to China's quota system on specialty fertilizer materials.

The company's approach focuses on expanding indigenous capacities, developing substitute products, and diversifying global sourcing for both specialty and phosphatic fertilizers.

At its Kakinada site, the company is progressing with the installation of a phosphoric acid plant (with an an-



Sankarasubramanian S,
MD & CEO of Coromandel Intl

nual capacity of 2 lakh tonnes) and a sulfuric acid plant (with an annual capacity of 6 lakh tonnes), with an investment of approximately ₹1,100 crore, announced last year.

This facility is expected to be commissioned by January 2026.

"The sulfuric acid plant is unique because it generates waste heat, which the company uses to produce 25 MW of power, which is sufficient to power the entire Kakinada complex," he told *business-line* over phone from Chennai.

SENEGAL MINE

To secure the rock phosphate required for phosphoric acid, Coromandel acquired a mine in Senegal that is progressing very well, ensuring availability of rock phosphate to Kakinada.

"We are adding additional capacity at Kakinada for 1

million tonnes of NPK (Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and potassium) fertilizers. This granulation plant will be ready by December of next year. Combined, the investment for the acid plants and the 1 million-tonne NPK granulation plant will be close to ₹2,000 crore," he said.

This NPK expansion is key because increasing NPK capacity reduces the reliance on imported DAP (Diammonium Phosphate).

For specialty fertilizers, Coromandel is setting up a Monoammonium Phosphate (MAP) plant at Vizag, which is a raw material for water-soluble fertilizers. Coromandel will initially put up a 25,000 tonnes capacity plant which will be available from the middle of next year, helping reduce dependence on China.

He said the company was expecting a good off-take of its products and looking at a growth of 25-30 per cent in revenues this financial year.

The integration of Nagarjuna Agrichem, acquired two quarters ago, is progressing well.

The company reported a second-quarter consolidated net profit of ₹793 crore, up from ₹659 crore last year. Net income for the quarter was ₹9,771 crore, compared to ₹7,498 crore in the previous year.

MP extends zero-interest crop loans

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, 23 October

To benefit farmers, the Madhya Pradesh BJP government has decided to continue the scheme for providing short-term crop loans to farmers at zero percent interest through cooperative banks for the year 2025-26.

The decision granting the approval for the continuation of the scheme was taken during the meeting of the state cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav at the State Secretariat in Bhopal on Thursday.

Under the scheme, no interest will be charged on short-term crop loans up to Rs 3 lakh given by Primary Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies (PACS) to farmers who repay the loan by the due date of the Kharif and Rabi seasons. The state government will provide a general interest subsidy of 1.5 per cent to all farmers, and an additional interest subsidy of 4 per cent



as an incentive to farmers who repay the loan by the due date. A target of distributing Rs 23000 crore has been set in the current year. The due date for the Kharif 2025 season has been set as 28 March, 2026, and for the Rabi 2025-26 season as 15 June, 2026.

The cabinet also approved the upgradation of 800 beds in the district hospitals of Tikamgarh, Neemuch, Singrauli, Sheopur and Dindori, and 810 new posts for these hospitals. In this, 543 regular, four

contractual and 263 posts have been approved through an outsourcing agency.

An annual expenditure of Rs 39.50 crore has also been approved for the creation of posts. As per the approval, the number of beds in the district hospital Tikamgarh has been increased from 300 to 500, in Neemuch from 200 to 400, in Singrauli from 200 to 400, in Sheopur from 200 to 300 and in the district hospital Dindori the number of beds has been increased from 100 to 200.

Ravaged by floods, farmers drop jowar cultivation plan, shift to wheat & gram

Abhijeet.Patil@timesofindia.com

Kolhapur: Nearly 60% of jowar (sorghum) cultivation in India occurs in Maharashtra. Out of the 15 lakh hectares in the state, nearly half is cultivated in four districts — Solapur, Dhare, Beed and Ahilyanagar — all of which have been affected by floods and heavy rain from mid-Aug to Sept.

This has caused significant waterlogging of the fields. There is no indication that the land will be ready for cultivation in the near future, suggesting that farmers are likely to abandon cultivating 'jwari', as it is locally known, and turn to other rabi crops such as gram, wheat, and sunflower. These districts have experienced double the normal rainfall this Sept. Jowar is grown as a rabi (winter) crop in Maharashtra, which accounts for one-third of India's total jowar production. Farmers typically choose jowar cultivation as it provides good-quality food for milch animals.

Satish Marda, a farmer from Mangalwedha in Solapur district, had grown onion and soybean, which were destroyed by heavy rain. "Now we don't have the money to clean



Jowar sowing usually takes place between mid-Sept and mid-Oct

₹18cr aid approved for Kolhapur

Kolhapur: State govt has approved Rs18.3 crore in relief for damage caused by heavy rainfall in Kolhapur district between June and Sept.

District guardian minister Prakash Abitkar said that 63 circles across 328 villages were affected by the excessive rainfall, resulting in damage to over 13,125 hectares of farmland and impacting 47,903 farmers. "The e-KYC process for 11,306 farmers is still pending. 27 villages had to be relocated with 719 families rehabilitated. Families of the seven deceased received Rs4 lakh each, while 187 of the relocated families were given Rs10,000 each to cover property and household losses," he said. TNN

up the fields and restore them to normal. Weeds have started growing in the fields. I have been growing jowar for several decades now, even though many have shifted to cash crops.

This is the first time I am not going to sow jowar," said Marda.

Haridas Hawale, an agriculture development officer of Solapur, said, "Farmers have lost their kharif crop. Now it

Intense rain damages 5,000 wells in M'wada

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar: Around 5,300 wells in Marathwada region suffered extensive damage during the recent heavy rain, a preliminary survey by the state govt has revealed.

Revenue department officials said many of these damaged wells will severely affect post-monsoon agricultural activity in the Marathwada region.

Govt has proposed financial aid of Rs 70,000 per affected well, depending on the extent of damage. In areas where farmland was eroded, govt is considering providing additional employment opportunities under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

—Mohammed Akhef

will take at least a month for the land to become cultivable. If farmers cultivate jowar, the conditions will not be suitable for growth, and the crop may be attacked by pests."

Looking to raise output of pulses 40% by 2030-31 crop year: Chouhan

**SANJEEB MUKHERJEE
& AGENCIES**

New Delhi, 9 October

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday said the government had set a target to increase India's pulses production by 40 per cent to 35 million tonnes by 2030-31 crop year from the current levels of 25.8 million tonnes in 2024-25.

He also called for maintaining a balance between the interest of farmers and consumers through higher procurement under minimum support price (MSP) and optimum import tariffs so that consumers are not unduly burdened.

Recently, the Union cabinet approved a six-year central scheme aimed at achieving self-sufficiency in pulses production, with a financial outlay of ₹11,440 crore. The scheme called the 'Mission for Atma Nirbharta in Pulses' will be

implemented for the period from 2025-26 to 2030-31.

Chouhan was addressing the media to announce the formal launch of the programme along with a host of other initiatives by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 11.

He said that the government has identified 100 blocks where productivity is very low compared to the national average. He said in these identified districts, efforts would be made to ensure procurement of urad, masoor and tur pulses at the prevailing MSP.

He highlighted that India is the world's largest pulses producer,



'Must strengthen food security without relying on global markets'

India will not compromise on its national interest amid a volatile political situation where trade and tariffs have become weapons, and asserted that the country must further strengthen food security without relying on global markets, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Thursday while addressing the 120th Annual General Meeting of PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He said PM Narendra Modi has made it clear that while India believes in being a 'global brother' and is concerned about the world, the country's interest remains the top priority. **BS REPORTER**

but is also the biggest consumer. The country has to import a large quantity of pulses to meet domestic demand.

The minister said that the pulses mission aims to boost production and make India self-sufficient.

"By 2030-31, we will increase the pulses acreage to 31 million hectares from the current 27.5

million hectares. We have also kept the target to increase pulses output to 35 million tonnes from 24.2 million tonnes in 2023-24," Chouhan said.

In the 2024-25 crop year (July-June), the pulses production is estimated to have risen to 25.23 million tonnes.

Chouhan said the crop productivity would be enhanced to 1,130 kg per hectare from the average yield of 881 kg per hectare.

Agriculture Dept. reaches out to farmers to scale up enrolment under PMFBY

Though demand-driven and voluntary, coverage of small and marginal farmers under the scheme has been witnessing a rise in Tiruppur district, in sync with the trend nationwide, say officials

**The Hindu Bureau
TIRUPPUR**

The Agriculture Department is reaching out to farmers for enrolment under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) for paddy, maize, sorghum and bengalgram.

Though demand-driven and voluntary, coverage of small and marginal farmers under the scheme has been witnessing a rise in Tiruppur district, in sync with the trend nationwide, according to officials.

During 2024-25, claims to the extent of ₹40 lakh for the insured crops were set-

tled in Tiruppur district, for loanee farmers, marginal and tenant farmers.

The National Crop Insurance Portal (NCIP) for on-line enrolment of farmers has enabled electronic transfer of claim amount to the individual farmer's account.

Crop loans

This year, the department is reaching out to farmers who had obtained crop loans to avail themselves of the utility of PMFBY through the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies or branches of nationalised banks.

Those who are raising

crops without loans are required to secure the adangal from the respective Village Administrative Officers, and submit the same along with chitta, bank account particulars, and aadhar number through common service centres, primary agricultural cooperative societies or branches of nationalised banks.

The particulars have to be submitted along with premium of ₹578 per acre of paddy (before Nov. 15), ₹545 per acre of maize (by Nov. 30), ₹55 per acre of sorghum (by Dec. 16) 55, and ₹254 per acre of bengalgram crop (by Nov. 30).

As per provisions of PMFBY guidelines, the premium share of the farmer is capped at 2% for Kharif crops, 1.5% for Rabi Crops and 5% for commercial/Horticultural crops.

According to the farmers in the district, delinking of Central government share of premium subsidy, implemented for farmers to get proportionate claims relating to the Centre's share since last year, would pave way for higher patronage.

Also, provision of 12% penalty on delay in payment of claims by insurance company is auto-calculated on NCIP.

STATE MOVES TOWARD STRONGER SEED LAW

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

AGRICULTURE Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao convened a meeting at the Secretariat with members of the Draft Committee on the Telangana Seed Draft Act-2025. The Minister reviewed the modalities of the proposed legislation, aimed at addressing longstanding gaps in seed regulation and protecting farmers from the menace of fake seeds.

During the meeting, the Minister emphasized that seeds are the foundation of agriculture and lamented the losses faced by farmers due to the proliferation of substandard and counterfeit seeds. He criticized the limitations of the existing Seed Act, 1966, and Seed Control Order, 1983, stating that seed companies have exploited legal loopholes for years. The Draft Committee was formed to rectify these issues and propose a robust

Tummala reviews Draft Seed Act 2025



legal framework. Committee members outlined the shortcomings of the current law, including a lack of mandatory registration for seed varieties, the absence of price control mechanisms, and inadequate provisions for compensating farmers affected by poor-quality seeds. They noted that the law does not cover green bread seeds and fails to regulate ancillary aspects of seed production and distribution. Rao stressed the need for legal rigor and accountability, asserting that the law must ensure justice for every farmer, especially in cases of crop failure. He called for

strict action against companies that release new seed varieties without adequate research and development.

The Minister affirmed that the Telangana Seed Draft Act would supplement existing laws and may be forwarded to the Centre if required. He urged a thorough legal review to ensure comprehensive protection for seed farmers.

The meeting was attended by Agriculture Department Director B Gopi, Seed Corporation Chairman Anvesh Reddy, Advocate Sunil Kumar, Seed Director MV Nagesh Kumar, and others.

MSP for winter crops hiked by up to 10%

● Support price for wheat, a key rabi crop, up 6.6%

SANDIP DAS
New Delhi, October 1

THE GOVERNMENT On Wednesday announced annual hikes in the range of 4-10% in the minimum support prices (MSP) for the winter-sown crops for the marketing season 2026-27 (April-June).

The MSP of wheat, the key rabi crop, has been raised by 6.6% to ₹2,585/quintal for 2026-27 season, which was similar to the hike in remunerative price for the cereal in the previous year (2025-26).

In the 2024-25 marketing year, the wheat MSP was hiked

TO BENEFIT FARMERS

MSP increase (%) of key rabi (winter) crops

■ Wheat ■ Gram ■ Lentil (Masur) ■ Mustard



Source: CACP, y-o-y increase, marketing year (April-June)

by 7.05% to ₹2,275/quintal on year, the steepest rate ever.

Officials said the hike in the MSP of wheat is significant as it is the second largest crop after paddy in terms of area under cultivation.

The government has set a

record wheat production target of 119 million tonnes (MT) for the 2025-26 crop year (July-June), as against the estimated record output of 117.5 MT for 2024-25 crop year.

"The expected margin over All-India weighted average

cost of production is 109% for wheat, mustard (93%), lentil (89%), gram (59%), barley (58%) and safflower (50%)," according to an official statement. From 2018-19, a new policy of 50% profits over computed cost of production was adopted which resulted in MSP hikes for rabi crops in the range of 5-7.6%.

The MSP for gram has been increased by 4% to ₹5,875/quintal in 2026-27 marketing year, from the current MSP of ₹5,650/quintal.

Gram has around 50% share in the country's pulses output and biggest pulse crop in terms of area. In the 2024-25 crop year, the area under gram was recorded at 9.9 MH, while the output in 2024-25 crop year was at a record 11.53 MT.

80% of kharif onion crop ruined in Nashik district

Tushar.Pawar@timesofindia.com

Nashik: About 80% of the total kharif and late kharif onion crops were damaged in heavy rainfall in Nashik district between Sept 22 and 28, with agriculture department's initial assessment showing around 40,000 hectares of onion plantations were affected.

Officials fear that this could lead to a drop in supply during Oct-Nov, potentially triggering a rise in onion prices. Officials said kharif onion plantation was completed across 50,000 hectares in the district by Sept 25, comprising 40,000 hectares of kharif onions and 10,000 hectares of late kharif onions.

Usually, kharif plantations take place from July to Sept 15, and late kharif plantations are done from Sept 15 to Nov 30.

Officials said continuous rainfall since early May, along with dry spells in certain talukas of the district, severely impacted onion nurseries, hindering seedling development and delaying the planting of kharif onions during July and Aug.

"By Aug 31, only 6,000 hectares had been planted. The pace, however, picked up, reaching 40,000 hectares by Sept 15. Late kharif planting began on Sept 16 and covered 10,000 hectares by Sept 25. Unfortunately, recent heavy rain damaged kharif and late kharif onion crops across 40,000 hectares," a senior official from the horticulture division of the agriculture department said.

The official said panchnama of the crop damage in the



Heavy rain damaged a kharif onion agricultural land in a village in Nandgaon taluka of Nashik district

district had started. "The exact crop loss will be known after the panchnama process is completed," the official said, adding,

"The area for late kharif onions, planting of which is usually undertaken between Oct and Nov, is expected to increase. But the regular arrivals of the new crop, which usually begin by Oct-end, may start from the second half of Dec. A scarcity of the produce may be created in Oct and Nov if the stock of the summer onions is exhausted," the official said.

Kharif and late kharif onions have a shelf life of less than a month, prompting farmers to sell them quickly at prevailing market prices.

In contrast, summer onions, harvested in March and April, can be stored for

six to seven months. Farmers typically store these onions in hopes of securing better prices later.

According to another official, the district has a storage capacity of around 25 lakh tonnes for summer onions, with current stock levels estimated at 10 lakh tonnes. Bharat Dighole, president of the Maharashtra Onion Farmers' Association, said the cost of producing onions was about Rs 1,800 per quintal. "Farmers suffer significant losses when prices fall below this threshold. Over the past few months, average wholesale prices in the district's APMCs have hovered between Rs 1,100 and Rs 1,200 per quintal," Dighole said, emphasising the urgent need for state govt to provide financial assistance to affected farmers.

Global fertilizer sector to face significant downturn next year amid price surge

Our Bureau
Chennai

Fertilizer demand across the world is set to decline sharply next year (2026) as rising prices strain affordability, says a new report by RaboResearch.

According to the "Semi-annual Fertilizer Outlook 2H 2025", the Fertilizer Affordability Index (FAI) has fallen to its lowest level in more than a decade, setting the stage for a deeper contraction in 2026 — though some regions still show signs of resilience.

The RaboResearch outlook is on the heels of China suspending exports of some of the key fertilizers, including specialty fertilizers such as Technical Monoammonium Phosphate (TAMP) and urea-solution products such as AdBlue, besides conventional fertilizers like diammonium phosphate (DAP) and urea from October 15.

CHINESE MOVE

Traders fear the Chinese move could lead to supply shortage and a 10-15 per cent increase in fertilizer prices.

Between April and September 2025, global fertilizer prices increased by about 15 per cent, with phosphates climbing nearly 19 per cent.

As a result, the phosphate component of the FAI dropped to -0.74 in September, matching the lowest level recorded in the past 15 years. "The nitrogen index also fell and is expected to decline further in 2026, affecting demand in the Northern Hemisphere," said Bruno Fonseca, Senior Analyst - Farm Inputs at RaboResearch, the research arm of the Netherlands-based Rabobank. "Overall, the FAI should continue its downward trend, with the 12-

month moving average approaching the negative phase seen in 2022."

Compounding the pressure from high input costs is a backdrop of depressed agricultural commodity prices. The report highlights that the world's production machine is "hitting on all cylinders", with global corn, wheat, and soyabean production reaching record levels in 2025.

"While there is a case to be made for prices to be well-supported from current levels, record production in major production areas like Brazil and the US is overwhelming the market with supply," Fonseca said.

"This will keep prices depressed in the short-to-medium term."

"Challenging profitability in the grain and oilseed sector portends poor fertilizer affordability and potential decline in fertilizer use in the coming year."

POLICY SHIFT IN EUROPE

The report also highlights a major policy shift in Europe. From 2026, the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) will impose a carbon tax on about 15 million tonnes of nitrogen-based fertilizer imports annually.

High-emission products such as ammonia and urea will face higher costs, prompting importers to seek lower-emission suppliers. Many are also exploring hedging strategies, including early CBAM certificate purchases and EUA futures, to manage carbon price volatility.

UNDER PRESSURE

RaboResearch expects the FAI to remain under pressure through 2026, signalling another challenging year for the global farm inputs sector — despite isolated pockets of resilience.

Centre raises wheat MSP to Rs 2,585/quintal for 2026-27

CCEA approves MSP hikes for all 6 mandated rabi crops

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: The Centre on Wednesday announced a Rs 160 hike in the minimum support price (MSP) for wheat to Rs 2,585 per quintal for the 2026-27 marketing year, as part of its efforts to boost domestic output and ensure remunerative prices to farmers.

The wheat MSP is Rs 2,425 per quintal for the 2025-26 marketing year (April-March).

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the increase in the MSP for all six mandated rabi crops for marketing season 2026-27.

The increase in the MSP, in the range of Rs 160 to Rs 600 per quintal, comes ahead of Assembly election in Bihar.

Briefing the media, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the Cabinet had approved the MSP based on recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).

Total procurement in rabi marketing season is estimated



REPRESENTATIVE PIC

at 297 lakh tonne and Rs 84,263 crore will be the amount paid to farmers, the minister said.

In absolute terms, the highest increase has been announced for safflower at Rs 600 per quintal, followed by lentil (masur) at Rs 300 per quintal. For rapeseed and mustard, the increase is Rs 250 per quintal; gram Rs 225 per quintal and barley Rs 170 per quintal.

The MSP for barley has been increased to Rs 2,150 per quintal from Rs 1,980 per quintal.

Among key rabi pulses, the support price for gram has been fixed at Rs 5,875 per quintal, up from Rs 5,650 per quintal. Lentil MSP has been raised to Rs 7,000 per quintal from Rs 6,700 per quintal.

For oilseeds, the MSP of rapeseed and mustard has been

raised to Rs 6,200 per quintal from Rs 5,950 per quintal, while safflower support price has been increased to Rs 6,540 per quintal from Rs 5,940 per quintal.

The increased MSP for rabi crops is aimed at ensuring remunerative prices for farmers and incentivising crop diversification, the government said.

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the increase in the MSP of rabi crops and launch of pulses mission will have a long-term positive impact on the country's food and nutrition security, farmer welfare, and agricultural production.

The hike is in line with the Union Budget 2018-19 announcement of fixing MSP at a level of at least 1.5 times the all-India weighted average cost of production.

The expected margin over all-India weighted average cost of production is 109 per cent for wheat, 93 per cent for rapeseed and mustard, 89 per cent for lentil, 59 per cent for gram, 58 per cent for barley, and 50 per cent for safflower.

Centre raises rabi crops' MSP 4-10%, approves pulses self sufficiency mission

Prabhudatta Mishra
New Delhi

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a 'Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses' with an estimated investment of ₹11,440 crore over five years to raise India's production to 35 million tonnes (mt) from the current about 25 mt.

Also, the government announced a 4-10 per cent increase in the minimum support prices (MSPs) of rabi crops such as wheat, chana (gram), mustard and masur (lentil).

Announcing the hike in MSP, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the Cabinet approved the new prices based on recommendations

of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). He said total procurement of rabi crops will be 29.7 mt at an estimated cost of ₹84,263 crore.

Though he did not mention it, it seemed he referred to the procurement of mustard, chana and masur crops as the government last year had purchased 30 mt of wheat alone under the MSP operation.

In absolute terms, the highest increase has been announced for safflower at ₹600 per quintal, followed by masur at ₹300 per quintal.

For rapeseed and mustard, the increase is ₹250 per quintal, chana ₹225 per quintal, barley ₹170 per quintal, and wheat ₹160 per quintal.

After the revision, the new

MSP will be ₹2,585 per quintal for wheat, ₹2,150 per quintal for barley, ₹5,875 per quintal for chana, ₹7,000 per quintal for masur, ₹6,200 per quintal for mustard and ₹6,540 per quintal for safflower.

PULSES MISSION

On the mission to achieve self-sufficiency in pulses production, which was part of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcement in the 2025-26 Budget, Vaishnaw said it had been targeted to achieve the desired production by 2030-31, and the scheme will be implemented from the current year itself.

The mission will particularly focus on increasing production of tur, urad and masur, with assured procure-

ment by the government agencies National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (Nafed) and National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Ltd (NCCF) from registered farmers.

Last year, too, the government had asked cooperative agencies to buy pulses at MSP from registered farmers. But in the main rabi harvesting season (April-June) of 2025, average farm-gate prices of chana and masur were 1-5 per cent below their respective MSP, though the rates later flared up.

The mission will also establish a mechanism for monitoring global pulse prices to ensure price stability and safeguard farmer confidence, the official statement said.

Farmers 'forced' to sell crop below MSP on pretext of moisture in Karnal district

PARVEEN ARORA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KARNAL, OCTOBER 2

Farmers are allegedly being forced to sell their produce below the minimum support price (MSP) on the pretext of "high moisture content" in various grain markets of the district. Moreover, instead of official receipts, they are being handed temporary slips, raising serious concerns about irregularities in procurement.

As per farmers, the average price being offered is Rs 200-Rs 400 per quintal less than the MSP, making them bear significant financial loss. They are demanding fair procurement with relaxations in moisture norms, highlighting that natural calamities have already affected their yields. The MSP is Rs 2,369 per quintal for common paddy and Rs 2,389 per quintal for grade A.

Meanwhile, paddy arrivals at the local grain markets have picked up, but much of the crop has a moisture content of 20-22 per cent, which is above the prescribed limit of 17 per cent, preventing government agencies from commencing procurement.

"This season our produc-



Labourers dry paddy at the Indri grain market on Thursday. PHOTO: VARUN GULATI

tion has fallen by 8-12 quintals per acre due to the stunting virus, commonly known as the dwarf virus, untimely rainfall and water-logging. Arhtiyas and rice millers in connivance with employees of procurement agencies are not procuring paddy properly, and we are being forced to sell at throwaway prices," said a farmer at the Karnal grain market.

Many farmers complain that officials, millers and arhtiyas are deliberately rejecting paddy stocks on moisture grounds to force them into distress sales. "We are given only temporary slips instead of proper receipts. It feels like we are being cheated in our own

mandis. My crop has been procured at Rs 2,150 per quintal, and I was also given a temporary slip. I will check the amount to be transferred into my account," said another farmer.

Farmer leaders have condemned these incidents. "This is nothing, but exploitation of farmers. The government had promised procurement at the MSP, but the ground reality is different. Farmers are already in distress due to low yields, and denying them fair prices will only worsen their situation," said Bhadur Singh Mehla, spokesperson of BKU (Sir Chhotu Ram).

He said that if the issue was not resolved immediately, then farmers would

be left with no option, but to intensify their protest. "We want fair procurement and relaxation in moisture norms. Farmers should not be penalised for what nature has done," he added.

Anil Kumar, District Food Supplies Controller (DFSC), said that procurement agencies were present in the grain markets to ensure that paddy was being procured at the MSP. "Due to moisture, there are some issues," he added. On the issuance of temporary slips, he said that these were being monitored by the officials of the market committee.

Meanwhile, a large number of millers are yet to come to grain markets for procurement, said an official.

Agriculture Minister asks National Seeds Corporation to hike market share to 25%

Prabhudatta Mishra
New Delhi

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday asked public sector National Seeds Corporation (NSC) to prepare a roadmap by identifying challenges to increase its share to 25 per cent from the current 4 per cent in the seed market. He assured farmers that the government would further strengthen the NSC to reduce the influence of private companies, whose main motto is to maximise profit.

Inaugurating six state-of-the-art seed processing plants of the NSC at an event in Delhi, he said the plants would ensure easy access to high-quality seeds for farmers, which is very crucial for the sector. The Minister pointed out that during the



Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan

15-day long "Developed Agriculture Resolution Campaign" ahead of the kharif sowing season, most complaints pertained to fake and substandard seeds.

"Therefore, ensuring the availability of quality seeds is highly critical, and the NSC can play a crucial role in this regard. The government is taking strict action on the fake seed issue," Chouhan said, lauding the NSC's efforts in contributing to re-

plenishing the country's food reserves.

FOR FARMERS

The Minister suggested that the NSC should innovate for the convenience of farmers, working in regional languages to ensure maximum benefits reach farmers.

After inaugurating the processing plant with a capacity to process 1 tonne of vegetable seeds per hour at the NSC head office, he also virtually inaugurated five plants located in Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh), Dharwad, Hassan and Raichur (Karnataka), and Suratgarh (Rajasthan), each having a capacity of 4 tonnes per hour.

The Minister also directed NSC Chairman Maninder Kaur Dwivedi to expand the NSC's presence to all districts of the country from the current 550.

Unseasonal rains lead to onion crop damage in Maharashtra; farmers launch stir for relief

Purnima Sah
MUMBAI

Onion farmers across Maharashtra have launched an indefinite protest from Monday demanding urgent relief from the State government following widespread crop damage caused by unseasonal rains. The Maharashtra State Onion Producers Farmers Association has submitted memorandums to district administrations in major onion-growing regions, seeking compensation, free seeds, and policy support.

"Unseasonal rains have broken the backs of farmers. The government should immediately announce financial assistance," the association said in a statement.



Vagaries of nature: An onion nursery damaged by unseasonal rains in Niphad taluka of Nashik district. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

From October 23 to 27, districts like Nashik, Ahmednagar, Pune, Jalgaon, Solapur, and Satara received moderate to heavy rainfall, ranging from 36.8 mm in Solapur to 58.4 mm in Nashik, according to the India Meteorological Department. This rainfall, unusual for the post-monsoon period, has severely

impacted onion nurseries, which are crucial for the rabi sowing cycle.

Farmer Sanjay Bhadane from Dhule district described the situation as dire. "Unseasonal rains have wreaked havoc in many parts of Dhule, including Sakri taluka. Onion seedlings, soybeans, maize and cotton crops have

been damaged on a large scale. Farmers, already burdened by rising input costs and unstable market prices, are now facing another blow from nature," he said.

Maharashtra is India's leading onion producer, contributing nearly 170 lakh metric tons in 2025, a sharp rise from 86 lakh metric tons in 2024. The six districts account for 94.68% of the State's onion cultivation area.

Crisis warning

The association has urged the government to act before the situation worsens, warning that if sowing fails, the January to April harvest window will collapse, leading to a supply crisis and further economic distress.

Nano fertilizer enhances soil health

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Bhubaneswar, 10 October:

The Unit Head, IFFCO Paradeep Unit, P. K. Mahapatra, emphasized the role of next-generation Nano Fertilizers and their promising future in sustainable agriculture.

He highlighted how Nano Fertilizers enhance soil health, improve productivity, and benefit farmers both economically and environmentally.

He said this while speaking at a crop seminar, jointly organized by IFFCO Ltd Paradeep Unit and CORDET.

Dr. R. K. Nayak, Professor & IFFCO Chair, OUAT, Bhubaneswar, elaborated on the characteristics of Odisha's soil, the symptoms of nutrient deficiencies, and their corrective measures for better crop yield.

Dr. Sangita Mohanty, Senior Scientist (Soil Science), CRRI, Cuttack, shared

valuable insights on Nutrient Management in Rice Cultivation.

Pradosh Kumar Behera, Block Agriculture Officer, Mahakalapara (Kendrapara), discussed the advantages of Nano Fertilizers over traditional chemical fertilizers.

He noted that the wider use of Nano Fertilizers can significantly reduce soil and water pollution while minimizing government expenditure on fertilizer subsidies.

Sitaratnamali Das, Block Agriculture Officer, Kujanga (Jagatsinghpur), highlighted various Government Schemes available for farmers and explained how they can avail these benefits effectively.

Sandhyarani Behera, Field Officer, IFFCO Odisha State Marketing Division, informed that 75 agricultural drones have been distributed across different regions of Odisha to assist farmers in spraying

Nano Fertilizers and pesticides efficiently.

Kulamani Majhi, Principal, CORDET, who spoke about CORDET's continuous efforts towards the welfare of the farming community and its journey since inception.

Jayanta Jena, IFFCO, who also proposed the vote of thanks.

Among the dignitaries present were S. P. Ratha, General Manager (Nano); B. K. Mishra, Joint General Manager (Transportation); Rakesh Pandey, Chief Manager (Vigilance), Prasanna Kumar Beura, Public Relation Officer, IFFCO and Sushant Kumar Jena, President, IFFCO Officers' Association.

More than 250 farmers attended the seminar and actively participated in the discussions. As a token of appreciation, each farmer was provided with one 500 ml bottle of Nano Fertilizer and one bottle of Biofertilizer.

■ Scheme aims to bolster farm productivity and self-reliance PM to speak with farmers today, launch ₹35K-crore agri schemes

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 10

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Saturday launch two major schemes in the agriculture sector, with an outlay of ₹35,440 crore. The PM will launch the 'PM Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana' with an outlay of ₹24,000 crore and 'Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses' with an outlay of ₹11,440 crore.

The PMO said, "Mr Modi will participate in a special 'Krishi' programme at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in national capital and will interact with farmers and, thereafter, participate in a public programme."

"The programme underscores the PM's continued commitment to farmer welfare, agricultural self-reliance, and strengthening rural infrastructure. It



Narendra Modi

will focus on promoting modern agricultural practices, supporting farmers, and celebrating significant milestones in farmer-centric initiatives." The Prime Minister's Office said.

The PM will launch "PM Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana" which has an outlay of ₹24,000 crore.

It has the objective of enhancing agricultural productivity, increasing adoption of crop diversification and sustainable agriculture practices, augmenting post-harvest storage at the panchayat and block level, improving

irrigation facilities and facilitating availability of long-term and short-term credit in the selected 100 districts.

He will also launch the "Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses" with an outlay of ₹11,440 crore aimed at improving productivity levels of pulses, expanding the area under pulse cultivation, strengthening the value chain – procurement, storage, processing – and ensuring reduction of losses.

The Prime Minister will also inaugurate and dedicate to the nation projects

valued at over ₹5,450 crore in the agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, and food processing sectors, while laying the foundation stone for additional projects worth around ₹815 crore.

The projects being inaugurated by the Prime Minister include Artificial Insemination Training Center at Bengaluru and in J&K, Centre of Excellence at Amreli and Banas, Establishment of IVF Lab at Assam under Rashtriya Gokul Mission, Milk Powder Plants at Mehsana, Indore, and Bhilwara, Fish Feed Plant under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana at Tezpur, Assam, Infrastructure for Agro-processing Clusters, Integrated Cold Chain, and Value Addition Infrastructure, among others.

ICAR panel shortlists 23 wheat, five barley varieties for commercial release

OUTPUT BOOST. A higher crop standards panel will have to give final clearance for new varieties

Prabudatta Mishra
New Delhi

A key panel of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has approved a total of 28 new varieties of wheat and barley for the seed sub-committee to consider for release. This comes even as the wheat sowing season is set to begin.

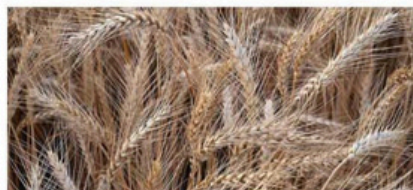
The Varietal Identification Committee (VIC), convened in August under ICAR's Assistant Director General SK Pradhan, reviewed requests for 46 new varieties of wheat and barley. According to the meeting minutes, 28 were "identified" for approval by the Central Sub-Committee on Crop Standards, Notification & Release of Varieties (CSN&RV). This selection includes 23 new wheat varieties out of 41 requested and all five new varieties of bar-

ley submitted by government institutes and private sector companies.

The approval process this year is reportedly under stricter scrutiny, after Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan expressed displeasure on farmers not adopting the numerous varieties released commercially. He reportedly questioned the rationale behind commercially releasing varieties that farmers ultimately do not grow.

WHEAT FOR SOUTH

Of the four wheat varieties the Punjab Agriculture University (PAU) sought clearance for, only two were identified for approval: PBW 906 and PBW 915. PBW 915 is noted for its yield advantage and resistance to wheat rusts in the North-East Plain Zone, while PBW 906 is ideal



BUMPER HARVEST. India's wheat production for the 2024-25 crop year has been estimated at a record 117.51 million tonnes, with an official procurement of 30 mt

for the Central zone, also offering higher yield and rust resistance.

Similarly, the VIC identified seven of the 11 wheat varieties developed by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) and only two of the six from the Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research (IIWBR), though all three of IIWBR's

barley varieties were cleared.

The Centre in May had notified 13 new varieties of wheat (including three by Pusa, two by IIWBR and one by PAU) and three of barley for commercial cultivation.

"Last time, some varieties were notified for Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu, where wheat is normally not grown," said

Pramod Kumar, former President of the Roller Flour Millers Federation of India. "There should be a study to find out if those varieties are successful during trials, why farmers were reluctant to adopt those. The government needs to seriously consider expanding wheat area as consumption has been exponentially growing, outpacing production."

India's wheat production for the 2024-25 crop year has been estimated at a record high of 117.51 million tonnes (mt), with an official procurement of 30 mt. With the government targeting an output of 119 mt this year, experts believe that timely approval and the adoption of higher-yielding, climate-resilient seeds will be crucial.

This will allow seed companies to start growing breeder seeds this year.

Excess monsoon rains fills reservoirs for Rabi

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, OCT. 24

The widespread excess rains during the monsoon season have taken the rainfall distortion index (RDI) to its highest positive value in 14 years. While the kharif crop of states like Telangana, Rajasthan and Punjab, could be affected by excess rains, the rabi crop will benefit due to high moisture levels in the soil.

In the 2025 southwest

monsoon, the RDI is at the highest positive value of 18.7 in 14 years, compared with 17.9 in 2024 and a five-year average of 9.9, according to Crisil.

In terms of the kharif area impacted, since 2012, 2025 saw the highest incidence of excess rainfall in a season, except for 2022. Though excess rainfall was higher in 2022, 15 per cent kharif area also had a deficit that year compared to 5 per cent in 2025. While rainfall was 8 per



cent above the long period average, there was excess rainfall in 10 states, which together represent 58 per cent of India's kharif-growing area. These include Telangana, Punjab,

Haryana, Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh in northwest, central and southern regions. Of top 20 kharif-growing states, 10 had excess rainfall, compared with five in 2024.

Excess rains will affect the Kharif output in Punjab, Rajasthan and Telangana, although it is not expected to have a significant impact at the countrywide level. While the full impact is yet to be

known, cotton, rice, and horticulture are likely to be affected.

The excess rainfall is good news for the next Rabi season. Abundant rain has improved the groundwater and reservoir levels, which is beneficial for the Rabi crops that rely on irrigation. If there are no adverse weather events and the upcoming Rabi season is healthy, we would see the third consecutive successful harvest, finds Crisil.

Trade deficit at 13-mth high; US exports fall 12%

Gold imports up 107%; outbound shipments maintain momentum

SHREYA NANDI

New Delhi, 15 October

India's trade deficit widened to a 13-month high in September, driven by a sharp rise in bullion imports, even as merchandise exports grew 6.7 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) to \$36.38 billion, data released by the commerce department on Wednesday showed. This growth came despite shipments to the US contracting about 12 per cent, following the 50 per cent tariff that came into full force in September.

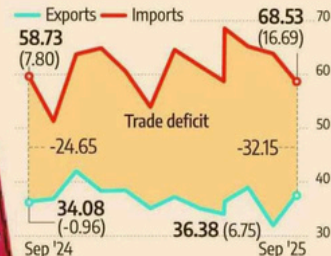
Imports grew at a faster pace of 16.7 per cent at \$68.53, resulting in the trade deficit widening to \$32.15 billion during the month. The trade deficit stood at \$24.65 billion in September 2024. However, services exports contracted 5.5 per cent to \$30.82 billion,

while imports shrank 7.6 per cent to \$15.3 billion, resulting in a surplus of \$15.5 billion. Services trade data for September is an "estimate", which will be revised based on the Reserve Bank of India's subsequent release, the commerce department clarified.

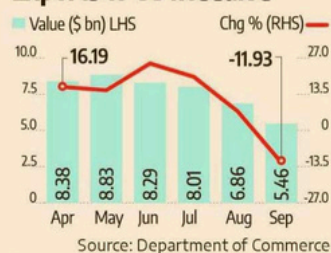
The surge in inbound shipments in September was led by a 107 per cent jump in gold imports to \$9.6 billion.

Trade amid tariffs

India's merchandise trade (\$ billion)
Figures in brackets are Y-o-Y chg in %



Exports to US nosedive



Source: Department of Commerce
■ India keen to raise energy buys from US for 'win-win' trade deal

Turn to Page 6

GST cut on bio-pesticides will benefit farmers: FM

'Goal is to enable rural entrepreneurs to transform local crops into marketable packaged foods'

FARMERS FIRST

- Under PM-Kisan scheme, Rs 6,000 per year is directly being transferred into farmers' bank accounts
- In Karnataka, over 43L farmers benefit from PM-Kisan scheme
- Nearly 100 dists in the country included Under PM Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana

KOPPAL (KARNATAKA),

THE reduction in Goods and Services Tax (GST) on bio-pesticides and micronutrients will bring direct benefits to our farmers and empower them, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday.

Addressing the audience after inaugurating the farmers' training-cum-common facility centre for agro-processing at Methagal village in Koppal district here, the Finance Minister said Prime Minister Narendra Modi "guided us to make GST simpler and more beneficial for the people". "Accordingly, we imple-



mented GST from the very first day of Navratri. GST rates on several items have been reduced -- including agricultural products such as tractors, solar-powered equipment, and other machinery used by our 'annadatas', she told the gathering.

FM Sitharaman further said that under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme, Rs 6,000 per year is directly transferred into the bank accounts of the farmers via direct benefit transfer (DBT).

"In Karnataka, over 43 lakh farmers benefit under the PM-KISAN scheme," she said.

The Finance Minister further stated that under the PM

Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana, 100 districts across the country have been included, and Koppal district is one among them.

"This scheme, with an outlay of Rs 24,000 crore and first announced in Budget 2025-26, is targeted at 100 districts across India, including Koppal. Under the PM Dhan Dhaanya Krishi Yojana, farmers will get quality seeds and training in natural farming techniques and water conservation, irrigation facilities will be improved, and access to markets will become easier," she said.

Koppal district in northern Karnataka is blessed with rich agricultural diversity, contributing around 10 per cent of

PM Narendra Modi guided us to make GST simpler and more beneficial for the people. Accordingly, we implemented GST from the very first day of Navratri. GST rates on several items have been reduced -- including agricultural products such as tractors, solar-powered equipment, and other machinery used by our 'annadatas'."

the state's paddy production.

"The fertile fields here yield a variety of fruits such as mango, guava, grapes, pomegranate, papaya and figs. The farmers of Koppal have nurtured this agricultural legacy for generations, and it is the government's responsibility to ensure they receive fair value for their produce," she said.

"When we talk about value addition, the PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM-FME) scheme immediately comes to mind. Launched in 2020, this initiative provides financial, technical, and business support to help local entrepreneurs set up or upgrade micro food processing units in every district," Sitharaman added.

UP to roll out Digital Agriculture Policy for real-time crop, market insights: CM Yogi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow, 15 October

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to expedite the creation of a Digital Agriculture Ecosystem in Uttar Pradesh to strengthen the agricultural sector through self-reliance, sustainability, and digital innovation.

The proposed system will provide real-time, integrated access to data on crops, weather, seeds, irrigation, fertilisers, insurance, markets, logistics, and institutional services.

Reviewing the progress of the Uttar Pradesh Agriculture Growth and Rural Enterprise

Ecosystem Strengthening Project (UP-Agrees) here last night, the Chief Minister instructed that a Digital Agriculture Policy be prepared based on national technical standards to ensure secure cyber infrastructure and promote innovation-based research.

Highlighting the vision of "From Agriculture to Industry", the Chief Minister emphasised value addition, processing, and local employment generation. He directed that under the coordination of the Uttar Pradesh Diversified Agriculture Support Project (UP DASP), the initiative be

implemented in collaboration with agricultural universities, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).

Officials informed that the Rs 4,000-crore (US\$500 million) project, supported by the World Bank, is being implemented over six years across 28 districts in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bundelkhand. The project aims to promote sustainable growth aligned with changing climatic conditions, strengthen market linkages, enhance productivity, optimise resource use, and support the development of agro-based industries.

India aims to boost exports of non-basmati rice to Japan

SANDIP DAS
New Delhi, October 24

INDIA IS SEEKING to expand its non-basmati rice exports in key markets including the Philippines, Indonesia, Japan, Gambia, Ghana and Liberia by promoting varieties tailored to local consumer preferences, a commerce ministry official said on Friday.

"We want to expand non-basmati rice exports in the identified markets where we think India's share in shipments can increase with little more effort," Abhishek Dev, chairman, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Development Authority (APEDA), said at a briefing.

India has been the world's largest exporter of rice—both basmati and non-basmati—over the past decade, commanding a 35%–40% share of global rice trade. The country ships aromatic and long-grain varieties to more than 140 destinations across Asia, West Asia, Europe and the US, competing with major exporters such as Thailand and Pakistan.

For Japan, annual import

OVERSEAS SALES

India's rice exports (\$ bn)



of rice is around \$ 800 million while India's ships rice valued at only about \$30–35 million. The most of the rice exports to high value markets like Japan are from Vietnam and the US.

"Keeping into consideration the distinct taste of consumers in Japan, we have identified sticky rice varieties from the north-eastern and Jammu and Kashmir," Dev said.

APEDA is aiming to promote the geographical identification (GI) tagged 15 varieties of non-basmati rice including Kalanamak, Lal Chawal, Pokkali and Joha in the

global market.

India exported 20.1 million tonne (MT) of rice valued at \$12.95 billion in FY 2024–25, according to official data. During April–September 2025, rice exports—including both basmati and non-basmati varieties—rose over 10% year-on-year to \$5.63 billion.

To strengthen its position in the global rice trade, the government has established a Non-Basmati Rice Development Fund. The Centre began easing curbs on exports in September 2024, nearly a year after they were imposed amid prospects of a bumper harvest.

India launches global AgXelerate platform to connect agri-innovators with global markets

Scientific innovation is happening globally, but commercial access and scale-up remain fragmented

NEW DELHI, Oct 15: To connect agricultural innovators with international markets, a cross-border agri-platform Global AgXelerate was launched here on Wednesday, positioning India as a critical node in the global agri-innovation network.

The capital investments and technology ecosystems platform, launched by AgVaya and BioSTL, with support from the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) and Federation of Seed Industry of India, will link startups, incubators and investors from the US, Brazil, UK, Netherlands, Israel, Argentina and Australia to create market pathways for science-based solutions in regenerative agriculture.

"Scientific innovation is happening globally, but commercial access and scale-up remain fragmented," said Donn Rubin, CEO and President of BioSTL, a St Louis-based non-profit

that has helped build over 140 startups, mobilising more than USD 3 billion in venture capital through its Bio-Generator arm.

"Through AgXelerate, we aim to connect India's dynamic agricultural ecosystem with St Louis's innovation hub, building bridges between innovators, investors and farmers," he said in a statement.

With over 150 million smallholders and an agritech sector that has attracted USD 2.5 billion in funding since 2020, India is emerging as a key hub for global agri-innovation.

Global agricultural markets are projected to reach USD 12 trillion by 2033, driven by regenerative agriculture, agri-biotech and precision-farming innovations.

"The real value of innovation lies in its ability to reach markets and smallholder farmers. Global AgXelerate is designed to do exactly that –

to build bridges between science, startups and scale," said Ram Kaundinya, Partner, AgVaya LLP and Adviser, Federation of Seed Industry of India (FSII).

"It will enable a two-way flow of technology, bringing cutting-edge global innovations to Indian farmers, while also taking Indian technologies and agri-solutions to international markets."

Vijay Chauhan, GlobalSTL Lead at BioSTL, emphasised that India is uniquely positioned as a source and destination for innovation.

"The focus of this platform is on smallholder farmers, who form over 80 per cent of India's farming community. Global AgXelerate aims to bring tangible benefits to them and help India become the global centre of innovation for smallholder farmers."

Trilochan Mohapatra, Chairman of the Protection of Plant Varieties and

Farmers' Rights Authority, highlighted that one of India's key challenges lies in ensuring technology reaches smallholder farmers.

"Unless technology becomes accessible to smallholders, meeting the country's food requirements will be difficult. By delivering the right technologies to them, we can enhance their incomes while maintaining sustainable food systems," he said, adding that better market access is equally important for farmers to sell their produce effectively.

Delivering the chief guest's address, RS Paroda, Chairman, Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS), said India was emerging as a credible global voice in agricultural science.

"The future of agriculture lies in collaboration, not isolation. Through initiatives like this, India can demonstrate that innovation partnerships, even amid global trade frictions, can deliver sustainability and shared prosperity," Paroda added. – PTI

Sankarasubramanian, CEO of Coromandel Intl, assumes charge as Chairman of FAI

Our Bureau

Hyderabad

S Sankarasubramanian, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Coromandel International, has assumed charge as the Chairman of the Fertiliser Association of India (FAI), succeeding Shailesh C Mehta.

Siba Prasad Mohanty, MD of Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Ltd, formerly one of the two Co-Chairmen, will now be the sole Co-Chairman of the association.

The 70-year-old organisation represents fertilizer manufacturers, distributors, importers, equipment manufacturers, research institutes and suppliers of inputs.

Sankarasubramanian, currently Co-Chairman of the



S Sankarasubramanian, Chairman of Fertiliser Association of India

FAI Board and Chairman of the FAI's southern region, has over three decades of diverse experience in the fertilizer industry, particularly in the phosphatic and potassic sector.

"We will continue to align industry goals with national agricultural priorities to foster growth, resilience and long-term food security," he said in a statement.

Crystal Crop Protection founder steps back as son takes expanded leadership role

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Synopsis

Crystal Crop Protection Ltd announced a leadership change. Founder Nand Kishor Aggarwal becomes Chairman Emeritus. His son Ankur Aggarwal is now Executive Chairman and Managing Director. This transition supports the company's expansion in crop protection, seeds, biotechnology, and sustainable farming.



Agrochemical maker [Crystal Crop Protection](#) Ltd on Tuesday said it had appointed founder [Nand Kishor Aggarwal](#) as Chairman Emeritus while elevating his son Ankur to Executive Chairman and Managing Director.

The [leadership transition](#) comes as the company seeks to expand its presence in crop protection, seeds, biotechnology, and sustainable farming solutions amid a rapidly evolving global agricultural landscape.

Nand Kishor Aggarwal, who founded the company four decades ago, will provide strategic counsel and focus on philanthropic initiatives in education, livelihoods, and sustainable development, the company said in a statement.

"This elevation marks a thoughtful future-ready succession," Aggarwal said, adding that the change would help propel the company's future growth.

[Ankur Aggarwal](#), who was previously managing director, said he would focus on innovation and building a globally competitive organisation while carrying forward his father's legacy.

The succession marks a generational shift for the research-focused agrochemical firm as it positions itself to play a larger role in Indian agriculture.

Gr Noida set to become a major agri-export zone with new hub

DIPIKA KIROLA

GREATER NOIDA: The Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) has proposed the creation of a world-class Agri Export Hub near the upcoming Noida International Airport (Jewar), in partnership with Patanjali Group and Innova Food Park, Kolar (Karnataka).

Under the proposal, Patanjali has been asked to sublease 50 acres of its allotted land in Sector 24A to Innova for setting up the hub. The land is part of the 430 acres allotted to Patanjali by the state government in 2017—300 acres to Patanjali Food and Herbal Park Noida Pvt Ltd and 130 acres to Patanjali Ayurveda Ltd. As per project terms, Patanjali is permitted to sublease up to 20% of its land, and the location, already earmarked for agro-processing, makes it ideal for such a facility.

“The proposed hub will



Located just 10 km from the airport's cargo terminal, the hub aims to reduce transit time and logistics costs, opening direct routes to Europe

boost Patanjali's own project while enabling direct farm-to-market linkages,” said Shailendra Bhatia, Officer on Special

Duty, YEIDA.

The plan, approved by the UP Cabinet, falls under the World Bank-supported UP Agriculture Growth and Rural Enterprise Ecosystem Strengthening Project. The export hub will serve as a modern facility for testing, grading, and packaging agricultural and horticultural produce for global markets.

Strategically located just 10 km from the airport's cargo terminal, the hub aims to reduce transit time and logistics costs, opening direct export routes to the Middle East, Europe, and Russia. The project is expected to significantly benefit farmers and agro-industries across western Uttar Pradesh.

YEIDA has already held initial discussions with Patanjali, and a final decision from the company is awaited. If approved, the sublease to Innova will mark a significant step in transforming the region into a major agri-export zone.

Tropical Agro launches insecticide to tackle chewing, leaf-eating pests

Our Bureau

Chennai

Chennai-based Tropical Agro, one of the country's top crop management companies, has launched a next-generation insecticide, which tackles pests and provides lasting protection against major chewing and leaf-eating pests, including fruit borers, Spodoptera species, and other Lepidopteran caterpillars.

In a statement, the company noted that Lepidopteran caterpillars, the larval stage of moths and butterflies, are among the most destructive pests affecting crops such as chilli, cotton, tomato, brinjal, rice and maize. Fruit-borer infestations in chilli alone can cause yield losses of up to 50 per cent, while several *Spodop-*



VK Jhaver, Founder and Chairman

tera species lead to severe defoliation in cotton, maize and tomato.

TRIPLE-COMBO FORMULA

Tag Hikima combines Emamectin, Chlorantraniliprole and Deltamethrin in a triple-action formulation that delivers rapid knock-down. Pests stop feeding shortly after contact, and high mortality is achieved

even in late-instar larvae, ensuring effective control of larval damage, including *Spodoptera*.

The formulation provides strong protection during the flowering and fruiting phases, when crops are most vulnerable, and supports higher yields through a phytotonic effect that enhances overall plant growth and vitality.

"Pests continue to be one of the major factors behind low yields and economic losses, and our focus is on delivering innovative, multi-benefit solutions that provide long-lasting protection," said VK Jhaver, Founder and Chairman of Tropical Agro. Recently, it launched a patented insecticide formulation, Tag Fly Gold, to combat thrips, fruit borers, whiteflies, mites and other major sucking pests.

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