

Kochi: Cultivation ,68 Hectares Destroyed

Rain hits crops, veggie prices soar before Onam

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: The prices of vegetables have shot up over the past one week due to shortage of supplies caused by crop loss resulting from incessant rain.

Vendors in Ernakulam market said that with Onam around the corner, prices would skyrocket in the coming days if they don't get adequate amount of vegetables from neighbouring states, including Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

KK Ashraf, vice-president, Ernakulam market stall owners' association said there has been a 10 to 20% increase in the price of vegetables due to crop loss and scanty arrival.

The price of shallots and green chillies will make you wince as the cost of both items have shot up considerably. The price of shallots has increased from Rs 30 to Rs 50 per kg and green chillies now cost Rs 60 per kg. The price of beans has shot up from Rs 30 to Rs 50 per kg and in the case of carrots the price has increased from

Officials with agriculture department said that vegetable cultivation spread over 68 hectares has been destroyed in Ernakulam

Rs 40 to Rs 50. The price of beetroot and potatoes have shot up from Rs 20 to Rs 30 per kg.

Nazar V, a wholesale vendor at Ernakulam market, said that price of shallots, green chillies, beans and carrot are likely to shoot up if authorities fail to address the sharp fall in the arrival of these vegetables. "During Onam, the demand for vegetables is high and the problem is that we are not getting the sufficient quantity to meet the spiralling demand. The scarcity is due to adverse weather," said Nazar.

Officials with agriculture department said that Ernakulam has suffered a loss of nearly Rs 14.38 crore in the agricul-

tural sector due to heavy rain and winds that has wreaked havoc in the district in the last two months. Vegetable cultivation spread across over 68 hectares has also been destroyed. Major crop loss has been reported in the district and banana farmers seem to be the worst hit, with 3.89 lakh plantains getting destroyed. This has resulted in scanty arrival of ripe and raw bananas and subsequently surge in price.

Due to scarcity in the availability of banana, the price of banana chips has also increased. Vendors in the city said that the prices would skyrocket during Onam.

"During this time, we usually get more than one tonne of raw and ripe bananas but in the past few weeks there has been a shortage. Owing to heavy downpour, a lot of plantain or banana cultivations were destroyed in these places, which has resulted in shortage," said Muraleendranath of Malabar Chips, Ernakulam South.