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Alappuzha, Kuttanad, Flood, Heavy Rain, Loss in Agricultural Sector

Kharif farming: 90 pc of paddy fields in Kuttanad under water

BIJU E PAUL @ Alappuzha

THE agriculture sector suffered huge loss due to the flood in Kuttanad. Ninety per cent of paddy fields in which Kharif farming was done are under water. The paddy production in the state will diminish by 50,000 tonnes in the coming harvesting season.

The second term farming was carried out in 9,907 hectares in the district and around 90 per cent of the cultivation is under water, said Beena Natesh, principal agriculture officer.

"Paddy has resistance to flood up to a maximum of five days, but this time entire paddy polders are flooded for the past three days. Farming was carried out in 145 polders and around 140 are under water. Out of which 41 have been destroyed after the collapse outer bunds. The department has calculated a preliminary loss of ₹5 crore. However, the amount is likely to increase. So the exact loss could be calculated after the evacuation flood water," Beena said.

The expected production of rice in Kharif season is 50,000 tonnes, but it will become zero

due to the flood, Beena said.

Mini S Nair, assistant director, Agriculture Department, Ramankari said, the entire cultivation in Ramankari and Chambakulam area covering more than 10 panchayats were destroyed in the flood. "Almost all the paddy polders are under water. Out of 5,650 hectares of paddy fields, 5,500 are under water. Many paddy polders in the area were destroyed after the breaching of bunds and it will take more time to drain out water," Mini said.

Joseph, a farmer from Pulinkunnu, said, the loss is above the calculations of the department. "The department has calculated only two-third of the original loss. Many farmers carried out farming after taking land for lease. The lease amount and our hard work will not be included in the loss. Very few farmers have insured their crop, so the intervention of the government is a must for the revival of cultivation," he said.

Agriculture Minister V S Sunil Kumar said the government will consider the demand to allot more relief to the farmers who suffered loss due to



A motorcyclist wades through AC Road in Kuttanad on Wednesday | ARUN ANGELA

flood. "The government will examine the possibility for allotting extra relief. The expenditure for reconstructing bunds will be allotted from the government fund," the minister said.

The water level in the low-lying areas of Alappuzha district still remains high although the strength of the rain is on the wane. A 71 year-old man died in Thalavadi due to a rain-related mishap on Wednesday, Varghese

Eapan, Karukapallil house, of Thalavadi panchayat died when he was being shifted to a relief camp in a country boat from his flooded house by rescue operators. The body was shifted to the Government Hospital, Edathua.

The District Collector has declared a holiday for all schools as well as professional colleges in Kuttanad and Chengannur taluks. The educational institutions, except professional col-

leges, in Cherthala, Ambalappuzha, Mavelikkara and Karthikapally taluks will remain closed.

Crop loss in Thrissur dist

The crop loss in Thrissur district due to the heavy rain has been put at ₹7.41 crore, according to a statement from the district administration. Lashing showers accompanied by high-velocity gusts damaged crops in 174.16 hectares.

Farming hit in Palakkad

Water-logging due to incessant rain have affected paddy crops in Chittur and Alathur taluks of Palakkad district. "In Alathur and Chittur taluks, many saplings have been washed away and the farmers need to replant them. Unfortunately, the farmers do not have seeds to prepare the seed beds all over again. Therefore, the government should initiate efforts to supply seeds through Krishi Bhavans in rain-affected areas," said Desiya Karshaka Samajam general secretary Muthalmathode Mani.