

Cyclone Nivar: Tobacco farmers in AP demand relief package to recoup losses

OUR BUREAU

Hyderabad, December 2

Tobacco farmers have appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to come out with a relief package to compensate for the losses they suffered in Cyclone Nivar. Tobacco farmers are among the worst hit as the cyclone wreaked havoc in Andhra Pradesh, causing damage to crops on over 12 lakh acres along the coastal districts.

Nearly two-third of the 86,000 acres of tobacco plantation has been hit by the incessant rains. "Crops on about 55,000 acres were affected by the rains and 5 million kilogram (mkg) of tobacco in curing was exposed to rotting, resulting in deterioration of quality," said Murali Babu, General Secretary, Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA).



Nearly two-thirds of the 86,000 acres of tobacco plantation have been hit by incessant rains

FAIFA representatives have submitted a memorandum to Tobacco Board's Chairman, Y Raghunadha Babu, seeking immediate intervention by the Ministry of Commerce to address their issues.

"The cyclone caused extensive damage to paddy, FCV (flue-cured Virginia) tobacco, chillies, bengal gram, cotton and horticultural crops along the

coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh. This will force the farmers to go for sowing again in vast stretches," he said. He said Nivar damaged paddy on 8 lakh acres, blackgram on one lakh acres, cotton on 50,000 acres and horticultural crops on 55,000 acres.

Worst-hit crops

"Tobacco is among the worst hit crops. Freshly sown samplings were completely damaged in about 24,000 acres in Prakasam and Guntur districts due to water logging. The assessment of damage to the leaf and and infrastructure is still in progress," he said.

"In the northern light soil regions of FCV tobacco crop, considerable delay is expected as the incessant rains have flooded the fields a few weeks after completion of sowing operations," he said.