

05.07.2017



CM Devendra Fadnavis' loan waiver list finds 813 farmers in Mumbai

Amid all the questions being raised, Fadnavis himself claimed that the figure showing the presence of farmers in Mumbai had stumped him too. "Even I was left wondering if Mumbai has farmers. But, this is a proposed beneficiaries' list. The list will be finalised after proper scrutiny," he said.



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis (File Photo)

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis took to twitter on Monday late night to announce the list of farmers whose loans would be written off on account of his government's Rs. 34,022 crore farm debt waiver. But the list share by him ended up attracting attention for all the wrong reasons. The Chief Minister's list contended that the Mumbai metropolis would have 813 farmer beneficiaries. This included 694 farmers in the island city of Mumbai and another 119 in suburban Mumbai.

The Opposition and several among the twitterati were quick to question this somewhat bizarre claims. Congress leader Sachin Sawant said, "When there are no land left to till in Mumbai, how does the government end up finding farmers is bizarre. This raises serious questions on the entire list declared by the Chief Minister."

Amid all the questions being raised, Fadnavis himself claimed that the figure showing the presence of farmers in Mumbai had stumped him too. "Even I was left wondering if Mumbai has farmers. But, this is a proposed beneficiaries' list. The list will be finalised after proper scrutiny," he said.

Senior government sources said that the government had compiled the list on the data obtained from cooperation commissioner's officer and the state level bankers committee (SLBC). Details regarding outstanding crop and agriculture term loans provided by banking cooperatives was sources from the cooperation commissioner's office, while the SLBC data was referred to for loans provided by commercial and scheduled banks.

Cooperation Minister Subhash Deshmukh said, "Some farm loan accounts from Mumbai and suburbs reflect in the list. This is being verified. I would assure you that the benefit won't be given to any undeserving person."

The controversy prompted the Chief Minister to announce that the loan waiver benefit won't be passed onto anyone without a proper scrutiny process.

A source in the CMO later said that the beneficiaries shown in Mumbai might include fisherfolk or people from economically vulnerable section who work or reside in Mumbai, but own farm lands elsewhere. "All these loans were provided by commercial banks," a source said.

But the CMO source said that the government was not taking any chances. "An explanation is being sought from the concerned banks. The information will be verified," he said.

Fadnavis's list claimed that debts of 36.10 lakh farmers across Maharashtra would be written off by the government. These comprise farmers who have defaulted on loans upto Rs 1.5 lakh. The government's loan waiver scheme has also promised a one time settlement compensation up to Rs 25,000 for those paying loans on a regular basis. It has claimed that the waiver package would benefit a total of 89.75 lakh farmers in all.

But the Congress accused Fadnavis of bloating the beneficiary numbers and the package worth. "The SLBC data shows that there were 2,35,839 farmers who had availed loans in Buldhana, while Fadnavis's list refers to the number of beneficiaries from this district as 2,49, 818. It is understood that the number of farmers with loans up to Rs 1.5 lakh would be less than the total number of loaned farmers. Yet this discrepancy. Similarly, the number of beneficiaries declared by the CM in Yavatmal does not match the SLBC numbers," Sawant said.

The Congress has accused the government of "deliberately misleading" the farmer population. The party has reiterated its allegations that about 10 lakh farmers, whose loans collectively worth Rs 10,000 crore, were restructured had been excluded from the debt waiver beneficiaries list. "Our allegation is that on account of the various caveats introduced by the government, the loan waiver would just benefit farmers who had defaulted on loans in 2012-13 and 2013-14. Our accusation is that only 15 lakh farmers would benefit from the scheme, and that the total benefit won't cross Rs 5000 crore," Sawant said. The government has refuted the claim. The Congress has also alleged that only 1082 farmers had so far received Rs 10,000 in grants for kharif sowing, which were announced by the government.

“It has been 23 days since the relief was declared. Our information is that till yesterday only 1082 farmers had received the sum. Only -Your data has been truncated.

Loan Waiver: Debt-ridden farmers from Vidarbha, Marathwada top list of beneficiaries

As many as 11,46,768 farmers from Vidarbha and 10,83,932 from Marathwada will have their loans waived. Western Maharashtra, which is economically most prosperous, has a relatively lower number of beneficiaries, with 7,391,48 farmers making it to the list.

WITH THE government announcing that over 35.11 lakh farmers across Maharashtra who have outstanding individual loans up to Rs 1.5 lakh will benefit from its loan waiver decision, more than half the beneficiaries will be from the 10 districts of Vidarbha and eight districts of Marathwada. As many as 11,46,768 farmers from Vidarbha and 10,83,932 from Marathwada will have their loans waived.

“The total number of farmers who will benefit from the loan waiver is 35,11,220 across Maharashtra. However, the list is restricted to only those farmers whose total individual outstanding loan is below Rs 1.5 lakh, irrespective of the size of their landholding,” said a senior officer in the high powered committee formed by the government to implement the decision.

According to the official, the list does not include the category of farmers whose outstanding individual dues are above Rs 1.5 lakh. Farmers who have regularly repaid their loan installments are eligible for a one-time benefit of Rs 25,000 as special incentive.

BENEFICIARY BREAK-UP ACROSS STATE		
REGION: VIDARBHA TOTAL BENEFICIARIES: 11,467,68	REGION: MARATHWADA TOTAL BENEFICIARIES: 10,839,32	REGION: WESTERN MAHARASHTRA TOTAL BENEFICIARIES: 7,391,48
Buldhana: 2,49,818 Gadchiroli: 29,128 Nagpur: 84,645 Washim: 45,417 Akola: 1,11,625 Chandrapur: 99,742 Gondia: 68,290 Yavatmal: 2,42,471 Amravati: 1,72,760 Bhandara: 42,872	Aurangabad: 1,48,322 Latur: 80,473 Beed: 2,08,480 Jalna: 1,96,463 Nanded: 1,56,849 Osmanabad: 74,420 Hingoli: 55,165 Parbhani: 1,63,760	Ahmednagar: 2,00,869 Pune: 1,83,209 Sangli: 89,575 Solapur: 1,08,533 Kolhapur: 80,944 Satara: 76,018
	REGION: NORTH MAHARASHTRA TOTAL BENEFICIARIES: 4,396,19	REGION: KONKAN TOTAL BENEFICIARIES: 1,017,53
	Nashik: 1,36,569 Jalgaon: 1,94,320 Nandurbar: 33,556 Dhule: 75,174	Ratnagiri: 41,261 Sindhudurg: 24,447 Palghar: 918; Raigad: 10,809 Thane: 23,505 Mumbai City: 694 Mumbai Suburbs: 119

District and region-wise tabulation of such farmers is under way. The total number of beneficiaries is expected to be around 89 lakh.

Western Maharashtra, which is economically most prosperous, has a relatively lower number of beneficiaries, with 7,391,48 farmers making it to the list. North Maharashtra has a total of 4,39,619 beneficiaries, while Konkan has 1,0,1753. The list also has 694 farmers in Mumbai city and 119 in Mumbai suburbs among the beneficiaries.

Drought-hit Buldhana district in Vidarbha tops the beneficiary list with 2,49,818 farmers, followed by Beed in Marathwada with 2,08,480 farmers and Ahmednagar in western Maharashtra with 2,00,869 farmers.

According to sources in agriculture and finance ministries, drought-stricken Vidarbha and Marathwada regions have a larger number of farmers whose average loan works out to Rs 50,000 to Rs 75,000 per hectare. In western and north Maharashtra, the average loan taken by an individual farmer is in the range of Rs 2.5 lakh to Rs 2.8 lakh per hectare.

A report by NABARD also substantiates the higher crop credit disbursement in western Maharashtra compared to Vidarbha and Marathwada.

Meanwhile, officials said the inclusion of 694 farmers in Mumbai city and 119 in Mumbai suburbs in the beneficiary list would be rechecked. According to preliminary reports, loan was given to some fishermen who had agricultural land. Across the state, farmers have taken loans from state, commercial, district central cooperative and rural banks.

Farmers from Maharashtra to sell produce directly in Delhi

The FPC movement in Maharashtra has seen much action over the last year or so. Working under the banner of MahaFPC, the FPCs had purchased more than 25,000 MT of tur last year.



After their success in government procurement, the Farmer Producers Companies (FPC)s of Maharashtra are eyeing the wholesale markets in other states as avenues for their produce. In the first phase MahaFPC, the consortium of FPCs in Maharashtra, are planning to venture in the Azadpur mandi in Delhi to sell onions.

The FPC movement in Maharashtra has seen much action over the last year or so. Working under the banner of MahaFPC, the FPCs had purchased more than 25,000 MT of tur last year. The FPCs had opened village-level purchase centres and had purchased the produce on behalf of the Small Farmers Agri business Consortium (SFAC).

Yogesh Thorat, managing director of MahaFPC, had said that purchases by the MahaFPC had helped stabilise tur prices in the local wholesale markets.

MahaFPC's move to enter traditional markets comes at a time when the state government is encouraging farmer and FPCs to explore alternate markets or to go for retail markets. Asked about their decision to go for the traditional wholesale markets, Thorat said it would be easier to be part of the wholesale chain rather than the retail markets. Onion, Thorat said, was a classic example of a produce from Maharashtra which fetches better returns in Delhi market than the local markets. "We aim to directly sell the onions from Maharashtra in Delhi's markets, bypassing the various intermediaries," he said.

In the first phase, Thorat said, MahaFPC will be concentrating on onions and slowly venture into other fresh fruits and vegetables. "On an average, the Azadpur market sees the arrival of around 100-115 trucks of onions and in the next two years, we aim to corner at least 20 per cent of the arrival," he said. The wholesale trade in Azadpur and other places is mostly controlled by traders who purchase produce mostly in Maharashtra.

The ground level procurement, sorting and grading will be done by the FPCs, while MahaFPC will act as facility coordinator. A Nashik-based FPC will be venturing into the trade of onion with Thorat hoping to start the process by the end of this month. "We are hopeful that we will get the grant from the state government for the same," he said.

GST impact: arecanut, copra markets in Karnataka may be streamlined



An arecanut packing unit of CAMPCO in Mangaluru. Both will be slightly costlier under the new tax regime.

The GST regime is expected to help streamline markets for commodities such as arecanut and copra, bringing more buyers and sellers into the organised market, while reducing off-market transactions.

Both arecanut and copra — the ball variety produced in Karnataka — attract 5 per cent GST as against 2 per cent VAT earlier, making them a bit expensive in the new regime.

They also continue to attract a market fee of 1.5 per cent and commission of 2 per cent in Karnataka, where they are largely grown.

Trade sources feel that the uniform tax and the fear of increased vigilance and penal provisions may bring in more buyers, mainly from the northern states, into the regulated markets.

To avoid taxes in the earlier regime, a section of buyers used to stay away from the organised markets and source their requirement from growers and agents through off-market transactions. Unconfirmed estimates suggest that the off-market transactions in these two commodities are estimated to be as high as 40-50 per cent.

Unprepared for shift

Trading in these commodities has taken a hit in the past couple of days over lack of preparedness, the cautious stance adopted by the traders and also due to the absence of any buying interest from consumers, mainly from North India.

Ball copra or edible copra is mainly used for making sweets, while arecanut is used for making pan masala.

“Trading didn’t take place for the second day on Tuesday. Traders are not geared up with the new billing/invoice formats and also there’s some confusion over the e-way bills. Besides, buyers, mainly the pan masala makers in North India, have stayed away from making any deals,” said a trader in Shimoga, the largest market for arecanut.

A clearer picture on demand is expected to emerge over the next week to ten days as buyers have been clearing old stocks, the trader said.

In Tiptur, the largest market for the edible copra or ball copra, traders are likely to return to the auctions and place their tenders on Wednesday, sources said. On Saturday, tenders had stayed away from placing their bids citing confusion over the new tax structure and nomenclature of the product. A section of traders in Tiptur has already raised invoices incorporating the new tax and may force others to follow suit on Wednesday.

TN Prakash Kammaradi, Chairman, Karnataka Agricultural Prices Commission, said GST will help reduce off-market transactions and streamline the arecanut and copra markets in the state.

Suresh Bhandary, Managing Director, CAMPCO (Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Co-operative), also felt that the GST will streamline the arecanut market with the simpler tax structure. As a result, more arecanut will come to the structured market, which was not the case earlier.

CAMPCO started purchasing arecanut from farmers on Monday after upgrading its software. Campco is also purchasing arecanut through primary agricultural credit societies in some villages in arecanut-growing regions.

Reduced tax on fertilisers will help farmers: ICRA



Domestic rating agency ICRA said the recent decision of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council to reduce tax on fertilisers to 5 per cent from the earlier decided 12 per cent would help farmers as it would bring down their input costs.

In a release, ICRA said the move would reduce the cost of a 50 kg bag of urea by ₹3 and lead to a similar drop in prices of other fertilisers. In the earlier tax regime, fertiliser sales were taxed from 1 per cent to 6 per cent. This included 1 per cent excise duty and 0 per cent to 5 per cent value-added tax (VAT), depending on States.

“With this tax rate being lower than the 6 per cent taxation prevailing in a majority of the States, fertiliser retail prices should see a marginal reduction,” ICRA said.

“However, farmers in States such as Haryana, Punjab, and Andhra Pradesh, who were exempted from VAT will now face increased tax incidence of 5 per cent and thus fertiliser prices will increase by 4 per cent in these States,” ICRA noted.

“This decision by the council is credit neutral for the industry as working capital requirement would remain unchanged,” said K Ravichandran, Senior VP and Group Head, Corporate Ratings, ICRA. But domestic manufacturers of DAP and complexes such as ammonia and phosphoric acid may face difficulties as inputs for these nutrients are taxed at 18 per cent, he said.

“The final outputs are taxed at 5 per cent while raw material is taxed at 18 per cent, creating an inverted duty structure. The competitiveness of domestic manufacturers against importers will erode,” he added.

With 30% completed, sowing may cross 90 lakh ha in Gujarat



farmer ploughs his field to sow millet seeds against the backdrop of pre-monsoon clouds at Shapur village in Gujarat. REUTERS

Bountiful, timely and widespread rains across Gujarat have cheered up farmers, who are likely to complete sowing on over 90 lakh hectares (ha) in the Kharif- 2017 season.

This year so far, farmers have completed sowing on an additional 10.55 lakh ha. Compared with the sowing completed by June 2016 on 15.16 lakh ha, farmers have already reported sowing over 25.72 lakh ha so far, Agriculture Minister Chiman Saparia said.

The total cultivated area under Kharif crops last year in Gujarat was 89.79 lakh ha. Thus, the State's farmers have already completed nearly 30 per cent of sowing this season.

Cotton continued to be the most preferred cash crop, with sowing completed on 12.64 lakh ha, followed by groundnut (7.44 lakh ha), maize (1.52 lakh ha), tuar (73,400 ha), moong (7,000 ha) and bajra (22,000 ha).

Sowing on over 90 lakh ha is expected to be completed in the next fortnight

Meanwhile, due to heavy and incessant rains across Gujarat over the last few days, as many as 31 people died due to rain-related reasons in the State, according to reports reaching here.

Small tea growers worried about further price fall

Over 60,000 small growers of tea in the Nilgiris district are worried as their earnings are falling drastically. The Tea Board has reduced the average price to be paid by factories to small growers for purchase of their green leaf in July to ₹12 a kg from ₹14 in June.

“This is hardly sufficient for us to make both ends meet. This is as much as ₹5 less per kg compared to the earlier months of this year,” H Thiagarajan, President, The Nilgiris Small Tea Growers’ Association, told *BusinessLine*.

“The post-GST regime is causing concern because it has begun with the Tea Board reducing the payment to us by two rupees. It is an acknowledgment by the Board that prices obtained by tea factories using our green leaf are falling in the auctions,” said Thiagarajan, “Instead of reducing the prices for the growers, the Tea Board must take action to increase the price for factories at the auctions.”

“We understand that in the GST regime, some corporates are not bidding. Small buyers have enough stock. So, we fear the competitive spirit will be lost at auctions and prices will crash further,” he said.

Export of mangoes to South Korea picks up

After initial hiccups, especially related to packing and storage, mango exports to South Korea has picked up. More than 40 tonnes of the ‘King of fruits’ have been flown to the markets in Seoul so far.

The issues that arose after the first few consignments were not about the quality of the mangoes. They were concerning procedures, packaging, cold storage, shelf life and low temperature issues, which were ironed out, said T Sudhakar, DGM of APEDA (Agricultural & Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority).

APEDA and Korean authorities organised a buyer-seller meet in the Korean capital on May 24 and 25, where several concerns were discussed and clarified. Mango varieties were shipped from Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai etc and the demand was very encouraging. There will be a few more consignments exported as the season was coming to an end he told *BusinessLine*.

A few consignments contained varieties that had a short shelf life and were not packed in boxes to withstand the low temperatures. This has been addressed subsequently. Varieties such as Alphonso, Kesar, Suvarnarekha, Banganapalli etc have been exported. A consignment of 2.5 tonnes of the Suvarnarekha variety was flown via the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at the end of May.

The Hyderabad Menzies Air Cargo Pvt Ltd coordinated with the farmer community in Vizianagaram, APEDA, National Plant Protection Organisation, Korean Delegation and Plant Quarantine to help the exporters meet the stringent norms. After that two more consignments with a total of 4.6 tonnes of mangoes have been flown from here.

Indian exports of mangoes are mainly to West Asia, the US, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Exports to Japan, South Asian countries and the EU have been low due to import issues there.

South Korea joined this year after carrying out pest risk analysis and specifying vapour heat treatment in specified temperature conditions . Efforts are on to reach the mangoes to Iran, Mauritius etc.

According to Sudhakar, Andhra Pradesh has accounted for 10 tonnes out of the 40 plus tonnes of the fruit exported so far. In the next week a few more consignments will go as Korean inspectors and importers were in Rajahmundry to source the mangoes directly from growers after due diligence.

Similarly, Kesar and Banaganapalli varieties have been readied from Tirupathi. The overall exports of mangoes is expected to touch a high of 50,000 tonnes this season, going by APEDA estimates.

NITI Aayog seeks review of sops in marine fisheries

Advisor to NITI Aayog Ashok Jain has called for reviewing some of the existing subsidies in marine fisheries sector as a primary step to effectively manage marine resources.

The impacts of various types of subsidies should be analysed prior to formulating a sustainable marine ecosystem management, he said at the opening session of a two-day national workshop on inclusive management of marine ecosystems at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute on Tuesday.

The subsidies which are leading to overfishing or illegal fishing should be eliminated for the sustainable development of marine fisheries, he added. Pointing out the dangers of unintended catch through fishing, he urged experts to further reduce by-catch.

Referring to the delay in implementing the latest technologies by the state governments, he said NITI Aayog would send directions regarding this to the States directly.

“India is committed to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) set by the United Nations. We have to look into the possibilities of sustainable marine tourism towards achieving the SDG-14, which is related to the ocean resources”, he said adding that community participation should be ensured for conserving the mangrove resources.

A Gopalakrishnan, Director of CMFRI stressed the need for sustainably managing marine resources. Globally, the market value of marine and coastal resources and industries is estimated at \$ 3 trillion per year which is 5 per cent of global GDP.

The workshop is being jointly organised by the NITI Aayog, CMFRI and the WWF-India with an aim to formulating an action plan in tune with the SDG-14 of the UN.

Timely rains in Gujarat raises hopes of sowing on over 90 lakh hectares this season



Bountiful, timely and widespread rains across Gujarat have cheered up farmers who are likely to complete sowing in over 90 lakh hectares (ha) in the kharif 2017 season.

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Business Standard

Monsoon 2017: Kharif sowing picks up in Odisha with normal rains

State govt had, in a separate budget, set aside a sum of Rs 14,930 cr for the agriculture sector



Buoyed by normal rainfall, kharif sowing has picked up momentum in Odisha, with the overall sowing area surpassing the previous year's figures.

As on July 1, the total sowing area in the state stood at 1.19 million hectares, compared with 1.16 million hectares in the same period last year, show government data.

In the month of June, Odisha received 207.8 millimetres (mm) rainfall against a normal monsoon shower of 216.5 mm, thereby, marking a deviation of 4 per cent only.

Sowing area under cereal cultivation stood at 0.824 million hectares, as against last year's 0.843 million hectares. Pulses, on the other hand, were sown in 0.072 million hectares of farming area, as on July 1, while it was 0.039 million hectares during the same period last year.

"Districts like Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Puri, Jagatsingpur, Kendrapada have received deficit rains where the sowing process have slowed down. But the crop condition is normal and satisfactory. The paddy sowing has picked up this year", said Anupama Baliarsingh, associate professor, department of Agrometeorology at the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT).

Government sources said that broadcasting and transplanting of kharif paddy and sowing of non-paddy crops like maize, ragi, pulse, oilseeds, cotton vegetables and spices are under progress.

The total production target for the Kharif season includes 10.31 million tonnes (mt) of food grains with an yield of 2,030 kg per hectare. Area covered under cultivation stands at 5.08 million hectares. Food grain production includes 9.653 mt of cereals and 0.6 mt of pulses.

The state government had, in a separate budget, set out a sum of Rs 14,930 crore for the agriculture sector, while estimating the state's food grain production to reach a level of 11.5 mt during 2017-18.

Odisha's budget is laying prime emphasis on irrigation in the region as it aims to achieve its target of creating irrigation facilities in 2,95,000 hectares of additional land. A sum of Rs 435 crore has also been proposed towards interest subvention to cooperative and commercial banks in 2017-18.

813 Mumbai farmers among loan waiver beneficiaries surprises CM Fadnavis

Maharashtra CM has ordered a scrutiny before sanctioning the waivers

Mumbai city and its suburbs are home to as many as 813 farmers on loan waiver list, a figure which has "surprised" Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis who has ordered a scrutiny before sanctioning the waivers.

These farmers figure in the list of probable beneficiaries eligible for benefits under the Rs 34,000-crore loan waiver scheme announced by the state government last month.

The Mumbai city and its suburbs are urbanised areas, leaving little scope for farming activity in the country's commercial nerve centre.

A district-wise list of beneficiary-farmers, released by the chief minister on Twitter last evening, includes names of 694 cultivators from the Mumbai city and 119 from its suburbs.

A majority of beneficiaries are from suicide-prone districts like Yavatmal, Buldhana and Amravati, all located in Vidarbha region.

As per the scheme, all the eligible farmers will get benefit of waiver of up to Rs 1.50 lakh loan outstanding till June 30, 2016.

Talking to reporters today, Fadnavis said, "Even I was surprised to find these two cities in the list. The 'beneficiary' farmers from these two districts would be scrutinised thoroughly before sanctioning waiver of their loans."

The chief minister said he has asked officers concerned to look into the genuineness of these farmers from the two urban centres.

The mega loan waiver was announced by the BJP-led government after a state-wide agitation by farmers in the first fortnight of June.

(Only the headline and picture of this report may have been reworked by the Business Standard staff; the rest of the content is auto-generated from a syndicated feed.)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Kesar farmers to reap fruits of Israel technology



AHMEDABAD: Israel rolled out the red carpet for Narendra Modi, the first Indian PM to visit the country, on Tuesday. But back home, his native state is already set to reap the fruits of Indo-Israel partnership, that too in the kesar mango hub of Junagadh. Using Israel expertise, farmers would now be able to grow mangoes even in the coastal belt and get more fruit per acre. What's more, two new varieties of mango trees grown using this horticulture technology would be resistant to salinity, less susceptible to strong winds that damage the fruits even while retaining the same sweetness.

The horticulture department of the state government has developed 200 saplings by grafting the salt-resistant root stock of Israeli mangoes with the Talala kesar at the Centre of Excellence for Mangoes set up in Talala under the Indo-Israel collaboration programme. The experiment has been going on since last two years and is likely to yield results soon. "The new variety will help farmers cultivate mangoes in places where ground water has become saline," Dr R A Sherasiya, state director of horticulture, told TOI.

Another variety that is being experimented is dwarf mango trees using the root-stock brought from Israel. "Mango trees grown with this technology require less spacing between two trees and bears fruit early. For traditional kesar mango, we need to plant saplings at 10m distance from each other. The dwarf variety will require a spacing of just 5m, thereby enabling farmers to grow more trees," said Sherasiya.

Assistant director horticulture, Talala, A M Karmur said trial with Israeli varieties has shown good results."The two new varieties will aid cultivation of kesar mangoes in coastal area. Also, farmers will be able to plant more trees per acre if dwarf variety is used. This means the production per acre would increase," said Karmur.

The luscious kesar largely grown around the foothills of Girnar mountains in Junagadh has got global recognition as `Gir kesar' mango after receiving the geographical indication tag. Kesar is the second variety of mango in India to get GI tag after the Dussheri variety grown in UP.

In 2015-16, mango production in Gujarat was 12.41 lakh tonne, of which nearly 2 lakh tonne was estimated to be of kesar mangoes grown in Junagadh, GirSomnath and Amreli districts.

RBI releases Rs 2,400 crore for Telangana, farmers to gain



HYDERABAD: The Reserve Bank of India on Tuesday released Rs 2,400 crore for Telangana, more than the anticipated Rs 1,700 crore, Union minister Bandaru Dattareya said. The release follows a directive from Union finance minister Arun Jaitley to RBI to release more funds to Telangana with the advice that the funds be used to meet the needs of the farming community in the state.

It may be recalled that farmers across the state have been agitating and demanding that banks in rural areas release cash to them from their accounts. However, the banks have not been doing so citing shortage of cash, severely denting the beginning of the Kharif crop season

operations in large parts of Telangana. Dattareya had previously promised that he would take up the matter with Jaitely and ensure infusion of cash into the state by the RBI following which he met with Jaitely in New Delhi on Monday and discussed the issue.

With the latest cash release, the erstwhile districts of Adilabad, Nizamabad, Ranga Reddy , Warangal, Karimnagar, Khammam, Nalgonda and Mahabubnagar will get Rs 150 crore to Rs 200 crore more than what was first promised as part of the Rs 1,700 crore that was to be released. In addition, Medak is set to get Rs 300 crore more while Hyderabad is to receive an additional Rs 100 crore, Dattatreya said in a statement. He requested banks in the state to ensure that the fresh cash infusion is used to meet the requirements of the farmers in the state.