

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2256
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19/12/2025

RELIEF MEASURES FOR ONION FARMERS IN MAHARASHTRA

2256. DR. MEDHA VISHRAM KULKARNI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether unseasonal rains in Maharashtra have caused extensive damage to onion crops, thereby creating severe hardship for thousands of farmers;
- (b) if so, the details of the crop losses assessed and the immediate relief or assistance measures extended by Government to the affected farmers;
- (c) whether Government proposes to strengthen the existing crop insurance schemes and relief mechanisms to safeguard farmers against such calamities; and
- (d) if so, the steps being taken to expedite crop loss assessment, ensure timely disbursement of compensation and implement long-term mitigation strategies for the sustained welfare of farmers?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

(SHRI RAMNATH THAKUR)

(a) to (d): As per the National Policy on Disaster Management (NPDM), the State Government is primarily responsible for providing necessary relief measures on ground level in the wake of notified calamities. The State Governments undertake relief measures in the wake of natural calamities from funds available in the form of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) in accordance with the Government of India approved items and norms. The State Government concerned is to provide necessary relief to affected people in the event of a natural disaster from SDRF already placed at its disposal, through their established channel of district administrative machineries. Additional financial assistance, over and above SDRF, is considered from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), as per laid down procedure, in case of disaster of 'severe nature', which includes an assessment based on the visit of an Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT). The financial assistance provided under SDRF and NDRF is by way of relief and not for compensation of losses suffered/ claimed.

The State Government of Maharashtra is allocated an amount of Rs.4176.80 crore (Rs.3132.80 crore Central share + Rs.1044.00 crore State share) for the financial year 2025-2026 under SDRF, of which the first and second Installments of Rs.1566.40 crore each, as Central share is released to the State.

As informed by the State Government of Maharashtra, during the period, February to October 2025, due to heavy rains, unseasonal rains and floods, onion crops were affected in 2.99 lakh hectares. An amount of Rs.809.19 crore has been provided as relief and assistance to the farmers for the 2.99 Lakh hectare affected.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY) along with Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) was introduced in the country from Kharif 2016 season. This scheme is mainly implemented on 'Area Approach' basis and comprehensive risk coverage for crops of farmers against all non-preventable natural risks from pre-sowing to post-harvest stages of the crops at very minimum premium for the farmers is provided under the scheme. Admissible claims are worked out and paid directly to the insured farmer's account by the insurance companies through DigiClaim module on National Crop Insurance Portal (NCIP), based on the yield data per unit area furnished to the insurance company by the concerned State Government and claim calculation formula envisaged in the Operational Guidelines of the scheme upon receipt of Centre and State Government's requisite share in premium subsidy. This scheme is voluntary for States and farmers as well and Govt. of Maharashtra has been implementing this scheme since its inception.

Under the scheme, actuarial/ bidded premium is charged by the insurance companies but farmer has to pay lower premium of maximum 2% of sum insured for Kharif season and 1.5% of sum insured for Rabi season for food and oilseed crops and 5% of sum insured for commercial/horticultural crops. The remaining of actuarial/bidded premium is shared equally by the Central and State Governments except North Eastern States, where it is shared in the ratio of 90 : 10 between Centre and State and provided to the insurance companies directly by the Government through fund routing agency i.e. Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd. The claims are paid only to the insured farmers under the scheme. There is no provision to allocate the state wise fund.

The losses due to localized risks of hailstorm, landslide, inundation, cloud burst & natural fire and post-harvest losses due to cyclone, cyclonic/unseasonal rains & hailstorms are calculated on individual insured farm basis. Farmers required to intimate the loss to the concerned insurance company, State Government, financial institutions/banks, online on National Crop Insurance Portal (NCIP) or PMFBY app etc.

The review/revisions / rationalization / improvements in the crop insurance schemes is a continuous process and decision on suggestion/ representations/ recommendations of the stakeholders/studies are taken from time to time. Based on the experience gained, views of various stakeholders and with a view to ensure better transparency, accountability, timely payment of claims to the farmers and to make the scheme more farmer friendly, Government has periodically revised the Operational Guidelines of the PMFBY comprehensively to ensure that the eligible benefits under the scheme may reach to the farmers timely and transparently.

Government has taken various steps to strengthen implementation of this scheme, for timely settlement of claims:

- Government has undertaken development of **National Crop Insurance Portal (NCIP)** as a single source of data ensuring subsidy payment, co-ordination, transparency, dissemination of information and delivery of services including direct online enrollment of farmers, uploading/obtaining individual insured farmer's details for better monitoring and to ensure transfer of claim amount electronically to the individual farmer's Bank Account.
- In order to rigorously monitor claim disbursement process, a dedicated module namely '**Digicclaim Module**' has been operationalized for payment of claims from Kharif 2022 onwards. It involves integration of National Crop Insurance Portal (NCIP) with Public Finance Management System (PFMS) and accounting system of Insurance Companies to provide timely & transparent processing of all claims w.e.f. Kharif 2024, in case payment is not made timely by Insurance Company, penalty of 12% is auto-calculated and levied through NCIP.
- Delinking of Central Government share of premium subsidy from that of State Governments has been implemented so that farmers can get proportionate claims relating to the Central Government share.
- Opening of ESCROW Account by the State Government concerned for deposit of their premium share in advance as per provisions of the scheme has been made mandatory w.e.f. Kharif 2025 season.
- Also, towards leveraging technology in implementation of the scheme, various steps like capturing of yield data/Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) data through **CCE-Agri App** & uploading it on the NCIP, allowing insurance companies to witness the conduct of CCEs, integration of State land records with NCIP etc. have already been taken to improve timely settlement of the claims to farmers.
