

PAYMENTS THROUGH DBT MODE WITHIN 48 HOURS
NAFED to procure 60% of farm produce this season

Centre to Pump in ₹8k cr in J&K to Boost Income of Farmers and Traders

Decision taken in wake of terrorists threatening growers against selling their produce in market

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New Delhi: The Centre will pump in ₹8,000 crore to help apple and dry fruit traders in J&K and revive business sentiment in the Valley, including ₹2,000 crore towards procuring apples directly from growers this season, officials said.

State-run National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (Nafed) will procure 60% apples produced in the state this season in the wake of terrorists threatening apple growers not to sell their produce in the market, officials told ET.

Nafed would procure A, B and C grade apples under a special Market Intervention Price Scheme (MISP) and payments will be made directly to the growers' bank accounts through the direct benefit transfer (DBT) mode within 48 hours, they said.

"Quality control-cum-grading committees will be constituted for each mandi for validation-cum-certification of the apple to be procured at the mandis," an official said.

The government would set up a state-level price fixation committee to determine procurement price based on the variety and grade of apples, and other incidental charges like packaging, transportation, storage and related expenditure.

Nafed would procure apples from farmers through the directorate of horticulture, planning and marketing. According to official data, Kashmir accounts for production of 91% walnuts, 90% of almonds, cherry and saffron, and 70% apples in the country, worth a total of ₹7,000 crore annually.

But the shutdown following abrogation of the special status given to J&K



Vice President M Venkalah Naidu with village heads from Jammu and Kashmir in New Delhi on Tuesday - ANI

under Article 370 and bifurcation of the state into two Union Territories early last month has hit apple trade in the Valley, with fruit truck movement significantly reduced.

To add to farmers' woes, militants have warned them against selling their produce in the market. Recently, militants attacked a businessman at Sopore — which houses one of the biggest fruit mandis in the valley — injuring four persons including a

4-year-old girl, after he tried to defy the separatists' shutdown call.

J&K chief secretary BVR Subrahmanyam on Monday asked the state authorities to assess the number of trucks required for transportation of apple crop and formulate a movement plan for trucks to take fruits out of the state. As per J&K administration, it would require 1,100-1,200 trucks per day to transport apples during the peak season starting September 15.