

# The Wave Andaman

The Voice of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

## Monsoon Arrives, Farmers Urged to Act Fast as Agriculture Department Issues Island-Wide Advisory



**Sri Vijaya Puram, June 5:** With the southwest monsoon establishing itself across the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and bringing widespread rainfall, the Department of Agriculture has issued a comprehensive advisory urging farmers to take advantage of the favourable weather conditions and begin seasonal agricultural operations without delay.

The advisory covers paddy cultivation, vegetable production, plantation crops, spice farming and natural farming practices, reflecting the importance of the monsoon season for the islands' agricultural economy.

Officials said timely field preparation and adoption of recommended practices could significantly improve productivity during the current cropping season.

For paddy farmers, the department has advised the immediate commencement of nursery sowing, field preparation, land levelling and strengthening of bunds to ensure efficient water management. Farmers have also been urged to maintain proper drainage in nursery plots to prevent water stagnation that could damage seedlings during periods of heavy rainfall.

A key recommendation this season is the cultivation of Dhaincha (*Sesbania* species) as a green manure crop. Agricultural experts noted that incorporating Dhaincha into the soil before paddy transplantation helps enrich soil fertility, improve organic matter content and enhance crop yields.

To support timely sowing, the department has made quality seeds of improved paddy varieties available through Agriculture Sub-Depots across the islands. Farmers can procure seeds of Gayatri and Dweep Dhan-11 (ANR-47) at a subsidized rate of ₹15 per kilogram.

In addition to improved varieties, traditional paddy strains remain available for farmers interested in preserving indigenous cultivation practices. Varieties including Musley, Khusbuya, Nyaw-in and Andaman Karen Sticky Rice (Black) are being sold through the Seed Multiplication Farm at Nimbudera at ₹20 per kilogram.

Officials have encouraged interested cultivators to secure seed stocks early to avoid delays during the peak sowing period.

The department has also issued guidance for vegetable growers, recommending the sowing and transplantation of monsoon-suitable crops such as bhindi, chilli, brinjal, cowpea, cucumber, bottle gourd, bitter melon, ridge gourd, sponge gourd, pumpkin, ash gourd and leafy vegetables.

Given the high rainfall expected during the season, farmers have been advised to prepare raised beds to facilitate proper drainage and reduce the risk of waterlogging. The department further emphasized the need for regular crop monitoring, noting that the humid monsoon environment can increase the incidence of pests and diseases.

Vegetable growers have additionally been advised to provide staking support to crops wherever necessary to prevent lodging and improve crop health.

For plantation and spice crop cultivators, including growers of coconut, arecanut, black pepper, nutmeg, clove and cinnamon, the department has highlighted the importance of maintaining proper drainage around plant basins and plantation areas.

The monsoon season is considered ideal for planting new seedlings, filling gaps in existing plantations and applying organic manures to improve plant growth and productivity.

Special attention has been drawn to cinnamon cultivation. Farmers have been advised to undertake harvesting and peeling of mature cinnamon bark during the wet season, as the moist conditions allow easier separation of bark from stems, leading to improved quality and higher recovery rates.

The advisory also includes recommendations for beneficiaries under the Spice Pravah Initiative. Participating farmers have been urged to undertake pit digging, field preparation, spice crop planting and soil and water conservation measures during the ongoing monsoon period.

Those cultivating black pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg and clove have been advised to ensure adequate drainage, mulching and organic nutrient application to improve establishment and growth.

Natural farming practitioners have similarly been encouraged to use the season for soil enrichment and moisture conservation activities. Recommended practices include the application of Ghan Jeevamrit, preparation of Jeevamrit and Beejamrit, incorporation of crop residues and cultivation of green manure crops.

According to the department, the prevailing weather conditions are especially suitable for enhancing soil microbial activity and establishing diversified cropping systems.

The Agriculture Department has urged all farmers across the islands to make optimum use of the monsoon season and seek technical assistance from Agriculture Sub-Depots, Zonal Agriculture Offices or the Kisan Call Centre to ensure successful crop production during the current agricultural cycle.