

Cyclone causes heavy loss to tobacco farmers

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CYCLONE Michaung caused irreparable damage to tobacco farmers. The cyclone, which happened at the time of harvest, wiped out the hopes of farmers.

Tobacco has been planted in 3,450 hectares in black and red soil under Devarapalli Tobacco Board limits. In the wake of the Michaung, heavy rains lashed the region for four days. As a result, tobacco plantations were washed away at some places. The plants rotted because the water got stagnated in the fields for four days.

In this season, farmers have bought tobacco nurseries paying Rs 1200 to Rs 3,000. Now the price of nurseries has increased exorbi-

tantly. Farmers complain that they have to pay Rs 6,000 to Rs 12,000 to buy saplings to replace damaged plantations.

Addanki Sridhar Babu, Executive Director of Guntur Tobacco Board, opined that the State and Central governments should support the tobacco farmers affected by the cyclone.

He inspected the tobacco plantations damaged by the cyclone on Bhimolu Road. The farmers handed over a petition to him detailing the losses they had suffered. Farmers said that 40,000 acres of tobacco crops have been damaged under the five tobacco auction centres in the upland region. Lakhs of rupees have been spent on

cultivation.

Reacting to petition, Sridhar Babu said that the damaged tobacco crops have been examined and a report will be given to the government with field-level estimates of the losses.

Regional manager Adishaiah, tobacco auction managing officer Amaldi Shyam, SGO Hema Smitha and Tobacco Board Farmers Association president Madhumohan participated in the inspection.

Tobacco farmers Gadde Seshagiri Rao, Undavalli Satyanarayana, Parimi Jagadish, Rambabu and others explained to the Executive Director about the loss they suffered during the storm.