

## Better yield kindles hope in Prakasm tobacco ryots

Seasonal auctions begin at 11 platforms of SBS and SLS regions

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**ONGOLE:** Tobacco growers of the combined Prakasam district under the limits of Tobacco Board's Southern Black Soils (SBS) and Southern Light Soils (SLS) regions are hoping to get better prices for their produce in the current season auctions being conducted by the Tobacco Board.

Though the severe cyclonic storm, Michaung, had destroyed tobacco crops in thousands of acres across the district, the farmers re-cultivated the crop with great expectations of bagging a suitable price from the buyers.

To their satisfaction, so far buyers offered better prices for the tobacco bales brought to the two auction platforms in the last few days.



Deciding to start Seasonal Tobacco Auctions in three spells, the Tobacco Board began the first spell of auctions on February 29 in two ( Ongole-1 and Kondapi platforms) of the total 11 platforms of SBS and SLS region limits.

The auctions at the remaining six platforms, which the board planned to hold the auctions in two spells, one on March 6 and other on March 14, were begun on Thursday. So far tobacco growers offered an average price of Rs. 230-231 per kg range in all the auction platforms.

“We have been cultivating Tobacco for a decade and after a long time, we got good prices in the last season and expect the same for this season too. This year we increased our cultivation extent to 3 acres. However, in the December 1<sup>st</sup> week, cyclone Michaung damaged the crop and we had to re-cultivate the crop which became a serious financial burden on us. We expect the same good prices from the buyers as previous year,” D Srinivasa Rao, a tobacco farmer from Kandukur mandal told TNIE.

Seven auction platforms in Prakasam, including Ongole-1 & 2, Kondapi, Tangutur, Vellampalli, Kanigiri and Podili, were allowed to produce 86.93 million kgs and permissions were given to 24,130 tobacco curing barns belonging 29,885 farmers, who cultivated the crop in an extent of 57,767.39 hectares. It is advised that farmers not to wait expecting higher prices for their produce and not to hold stocks anticipating better prices,” Tobacco Board regional manager M Lakshman Rao explained.

It was learnt that the farmers have cultivated tobacco in around 72,345 hectares, which exceeded the permitted extent in all seven tobacco auction centre limits.

**Source:** <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/andhra-pradesh/2024/Mar/08/better-yield-kindles-hope-in-prakasm-tobacco-ryots>