

Plantation sector may have suffered ₹5,000-cr. loss due to floods : UPASI

Extent of the damage is unprecedented, says president Jayaraman

INDRANI DUTTA
KOLKATA

The plantation sector in the south, including tea, coffee, rubber, cardamom and pepper, is estimated to have suffered a ₹5,000-crore crop loss due to the recent floods in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

“These are the early estimates made by the United Planters Association of South India (UPASI) and the extent of the damage is unprecedented,” T. Jayaraman, president of the apex body, told *The Hindu*.

Losses may widen

In some cases, substantial area under cultivation has been lost to landslips, he said. The losses include those of field crops and



Nature's fury: Losses may increase due to attacks from pests and fungi on stocks inside warehouses. ■ AFP

stocks in warehouses and they may increase due to attacks from pests and fungi in the coming months.

In respect of tea, a crop loss ranging between 41 and 64% is being feared for August alone at a time when adverse weather conditions

had already battered production since June. “There was hardly any sunlight on the tea bushes till August,” said Ullas Menon, Secretary General, UPASI.

The coffee-producing regions of Kodagu, Hassan and Chikmagalur in Karnataka,

accounting for 70 % of the country's crop, were ravaged by rains causing berry dropping, according to an UPASI report.

The Coffee Board had estimated a crop loss of about 82,000 tonne (annual output of 6.9 lakh tonne in 2017-18). The loss is the highest in Karnataka followed by Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the board said. Mr. Jayaraman said that the crop loss in respect of rubber is estimated at about 1.25 lakh tonne (out of an annual average output of 9 lakh tonne).

In respect of spices, pepper vines and cardamom plants had been badly affected. Almost 50% of the average annual pepper output of 55,000 tonne may be lost, said UPASI.